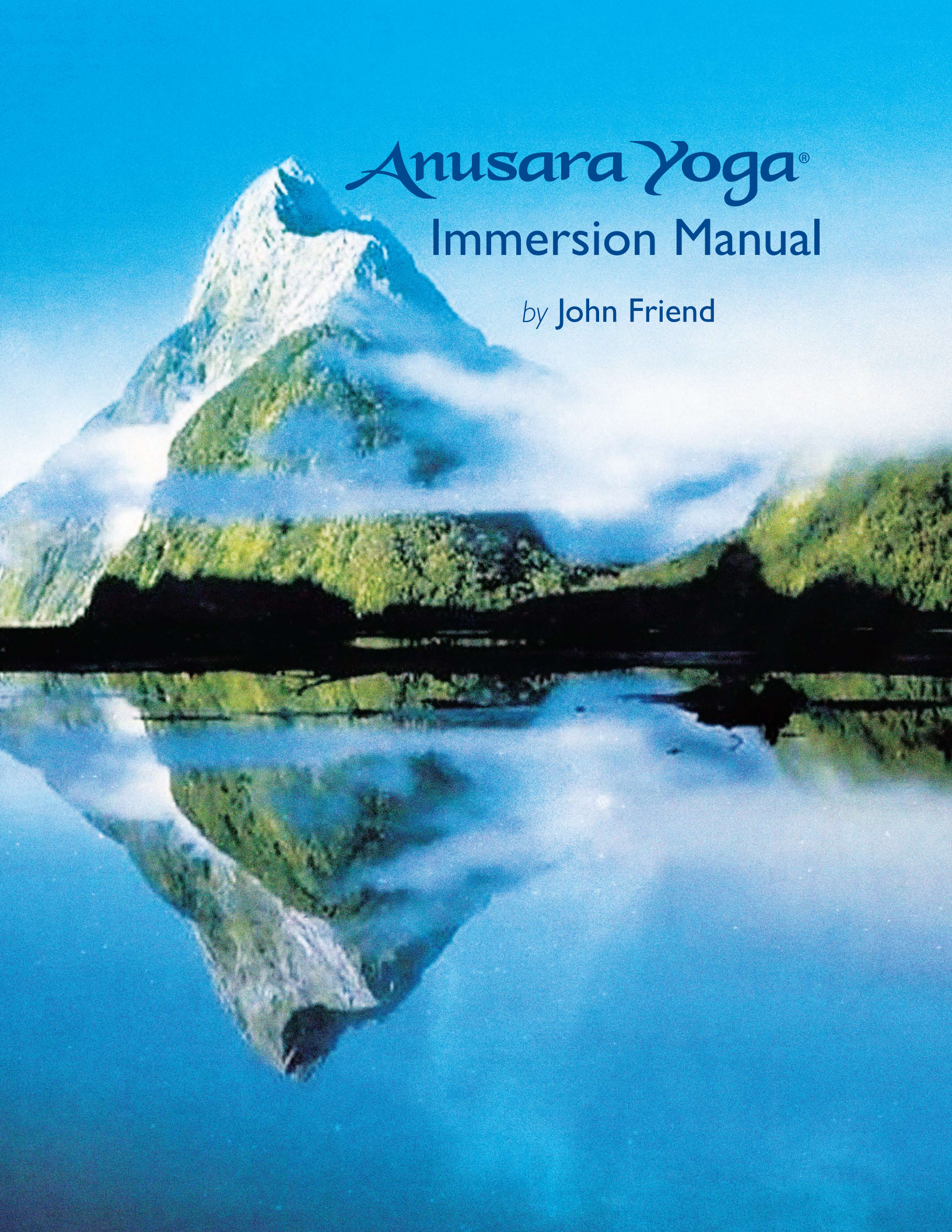


Anusara Yoga®
Immersion Manual

by John Friend

Anusara Yoga®
Immersion Manual

by John Friend

Anusara Press™

Anusara Press™
9400 Grogan's Mill Rd., Ste. 200
The Woodlands, TX 77380
(888)398-9642
(281)367-2744 (fax)
www.anusara.com

Copyright © 2010 by John Friend.

This manual represents a great deal of time, effort, and love.
Please respect this by honoring the copyright.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means—electronic, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

We are delighted by your enthusiasm for Anusara yoga demonstrated through your commitment to this training. Anusara yoga is a highly esteemed and professional yoga school in which teachers are rigorously trained over several years in a broad and in-depth curriculum. Within the Anusara yoga curriculum, there are two classifications of teachers: certified Anusara yoga teacher and Anusara-Inspired yoga teacher. Both classifications of teachers receive licensure through the official Anusara administration. Taking a 100-hour Immersion and / or taking a Teacher Training does not allow you to advertise that you are teaching either Anusara yoga or Anusara-Inspired yoga. You must meet the all of the stringent requirements and also become licensed in order to teach either Anusara yoga or Anusara-Inspired yoga. This is all to ensure the integrity of the vision of Anusara yoga while it expands. To find out more about our curriculum and about our licensing, please visit the Curriculum section of our website at www.anusara.com.

Table of Contents

Overview of Anusara Yoga 1
What is Anusara Yoga? 1
Historical Overview of Anusara Yoga and John Friend 2
The Methodology of Anusara Yoga 3
The Path of Yoga 4
Yoga Philosophy 5
The Tantric Vision of Anusara Yoga 5
Tantric Metaphysics 6
The Ethics of Anusara Yoga 6
Tantric Cosmology and the Nature of the Universe 8
The 36 Principles 8
The Absolute - Nature of Ultimate Reality 9
Essential Attributes of the Absolute 9
Five Key Aspects of the One 9
The Relative World – Embodiment, the Microcosm 10
Cycles of Nature 11
5 Divine Acts of Shiva 11
Concealment vs. Revelation – vilaya and anugraha 11
Grace – the power of revelation 11
Maya 12
5 Kanchukas - Cloaks 12
The 3 Malas 12
The 9 Rasas 13
The 25 Tattvas of the Samkhya System 13
Purusha – Prakriti 13
The 3 Gunas – essential qualities of Nature 14
3 Levels of Mind 14
20 Tattvas of the Physical Body 14
Subtle Body Anatomy 15

Cosmic Energy – Shakti in the body 15
The Breath 16
Spatial Orientation/Direction 16

The 36 Tattvas of Tantric Cosmology Chart 17

Tantric Tattva Correspondences Chart 18
Pranic System 19
Chakras 20

The Physical Body 21
Skeletal Structure 22
Optimal Blueprint in General Form of All Poses 22
Legs 22
Feet 23
Arms 23
Hands 24
Neck and Head 24

Fundamentals of Practice 24
Studentship 24
Measuring the Efficacy of the Practice 25

Patanjali – Classical Yoga Overview 26

Bhagavad Gita 27

Practicing Anusara Yoga 30
Universal Principles of Alignment 30
The 3 A's 30
Attitude (the Will to be, know and to do) 30
Alignment (knowing the Will) 31
Action (manifesting the Will) 32
Focal Points 32
Balanced Action 33
Applying the 3 A's Specifically in the Poses 34
Opening to Grace 34
Muscular Energy 35

Inner Spiral/Expanding Spiral 36
Outer Spiral/Contracting Spiral 36
Organic Energy 37
The Loops 38
Other Key Principles of Alignment 40
Transitioning (Vinyasa) 40
The Principles of the Breath in Practice 41
Ujjayi 42
General Principles of the Breath in Asana 43
Specific Principles of the Breath 43
General Principles for Classes of Poses 44

Alignment Principles for the Foundation of the Pose 48
Hands 48
Feet 48
Hips 48
Legs 48
Knees 48
Forearms 49
Head 49

Level I Syllabus 50
Standing Poses 50
Sitting Poses, Forward Bends, and Hip-openers 50
Sitting Twists 51
Inversions 51
Backbends 51
Handbalancings 52
Supine 52
Miscellaneous 52
Warm-Ups 52

Level II Syllabus 53
Standing Poses 53
Sitting Poses, Forward Bends, and Hip-openers 53

Sitting Twists 54
Inversions 54
Handbalancings 55
Backbends 55
Supine and Miscellaneous 56
Restoratives 56

Level III Syllabus 58
Standing Poses 58
Sitting Forward Bends and Hip-openers 58
Sitting Twists 59
Inversions 59
Backbends 59
Handbalancings 60

Index 61

Overview of Anusara Yoga

What is Anusara Yoga?

- Modern hatha yoga system founded in 1997 by John Friend.
- Unifies a life-affirming Shiva-Shakti Tantric philosophy with Universal Principles of Alignment.
  - Uplifting philosophy, epitomized by a "celebration of the heart" that looks for the good in all people and all things.
- Combines various main paths of yoga (Hatha, Jnana, and Bhakti) that help to open all levels of one's being—body, mind, and heart.
- Holds the spiritual purposes or highest intentions of practicing hatha yoga as paramount while on and off the yoga mat.
- Heart-oriented hatha yoga style:
  - Scientific art that creatively expresses spirit from inside out.
  - The body is a sacred instrument of alignment and reunion with the Divine.
  - The poses are ultimately prayers, offerings, celebrations, diverse forms of spiritual art which glorify the divine.
- Honors traditional yogic paths, and yet as a modern style it explores new frontiers of creativity in this sacred practice.
- The Anusara community (kula) is inclusive, life-affirming, and evolving. Individuality and creative self-expression, which are in alignment with our principles and which glorify the kula, are encouraged and celebrated. This community feels like it has the tightness of a family, yet the looseness of a merry band of bohemian artists.
- Serves and honors all levels of experience or ability, from children to seniors, and students with special therapeutic needs to advanced practitioners.
- Welcomes all forms of cultural and ethnic diversity. Furthermore, Anusara encourages a wide variety of spiritual and religious self-expressions, which are heart-centered and foster love and happiness. We acknowledge, respect, and invite a diversity of experience both within our own community and among those outside the community who are seeking to align with the Divine. Our experience of diversity and difference is an affirmation of the Divine's own experience of inclusiveness, non prejudice, and celebration of plurality. We lead by the example of our own lives, while respecting others' choices to express their own views and values. With deep respect we warmly invite everyone to join the grand celebration of life through Anusara yoga.
- Without a rigid dogma, the school is open to continual change and restructuring. Self-examination, discovery, and receptivity to new ideas are foundational to this dynamic system. Individual creativity and investigation are always encouraged within the bounds of basic alignment principles and philosophic precepts of Anusara yoga.
- Anusara yoga grows with harmony and integrity through our combined vision to unveil the innate goodness, worthiness, and Supreme nature of each and every being.

Historical Overview of Anusara Yoga and John Friend

- **1967** – John Friend was introduced to yoga by his mother, Ann Friend, via stories she read him about yogis with supernatural powers.
- **1972** – John began studying Juan Mascaro's translations of the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Upanishads*. At that time, he also started the practice of hatha yoga using Swami Satchidananda's book *Integral Hatha Yoga* and Jess Stern's *Yoga, Youth and Reincarnation*.
- **1976** – John began a regular practice of sitting meditation while studying with a Sufi group as well as members of the Theosophical Society in his hometown of Youngstown, Ohio.
- **1977** – John Friend attended the University of Cincinnati where he studied Physics and Poetry.
- **1979** – John Friend moved to Texas.
- **1980** – John Friend started teaching hatha yoga part-time.
- **1983** – John Friend graduated from Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University with a major in Finance in Accounting, Minor in Physics. He was the President of the Metaphysical Society.
- **1986** – John Friend became a full-time yoga teacher.
- **1986** – John Friend discovered Iyengar Yoga.
- **1987** – John Friend practiced hatha yoga extensively with Pattabhi Jois and various Iyengar teachers.
- **1989** – John Friend met Gurumayi Chidvilasananda in Ganeshpuri, India. She immediately gave John a powerful experience of Grace.
- **1990 to 1995** – John earned two Iyengar Yoga teaching certificates (Introductory and Junior Intermediate).
- **1991 to 2004** – John was regularly offering seva in Siddha Yoga as the primary consultant for hatha yoga department. It was there that John learned to integrate heart theme into physical postures and actions.
- **1991** – John was on the Board of Directors of International Committee for Iyengar. This committee upheld the ethical guidelines. John oversaw administrative functions to serve the President of the committee.
- **1995** – John's teaching had evolved away from the Iyengar system to such a degree that out of respect for his teacher Mr. Iyengar, John formally resigned his Iyengar certification.
- **1972 to the Present** – John has also studied such philosophies and religions as Buddhism, Taoism, Sufism, Jewish Mysticism, Theosophy, Wicca, and Freemasonry. On a more physical side, John is well-versed in anatomy, kinesiology, and physiology, and in 1994 he earned a National Certification for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork.
- **August 15th 1997** – ***John Friend founded Anusara yoga***. This was India's Independence Day in1947. It was also the day that Bhagawan Nityandana gave his sandals to Swami Muktananda Paramahamsa, after which time he was never the same!
- **1998** – The first Anusara Yoga Teacher Training Manual published and John held the first Teacher Training.
- **1999** – John certified the first Anusara yoga teacher.
- **2010 and Beyond!** Now we've coalesced enough talent and resources within our community that we have become a strong vertically integrated means for the greater distribution of our vision world wide. Our vision is about attitude. We use the Universal Principles of Alignment to serve our vision. As a result, we are all at a higher level of integration of dancing with the Shakti.

- Currently
  - Certified Anusara yoga teachers: 288
  - Anusara-Inspired yoga teachers: 905
- Anusara yoga is in over 70 countries and the Teacher Training Manual is in several languages. Within the community, there is a world wide feeling of connection. There is harmony within our growth and so much mutual respect, honoring that the ethics committee does not have to be very active at all. Our community is based on a vision of love and care where we respect and celebrate of one another, which helps to uplift everyone.

The Methodology of Anusara Yoga

The Anusara yoga method is distinguished by the integration of several elements which are common in every class:

- The Shiva-Shakti Tantric philosophy of intrinsic goodness underlies the methodology of teaching Anusara yoga. Consequently, Anusara yoga teachers, first and foremost, look for the good in all things, especially within themselves and their students. Anusara yoga teachers help enhance and reveal the beauty and Divine qualities that are already present in the students' poses. They do not try to "fix" or "correct" students' alignment. Instead, they are dedicated to serving each student and helping them unveil their innate goodness, worthiness, and Supreme nature. Furthermore, Anusara yoga teachers are committed to helping build and empower each student's self-esteem, while inspiring light-heartedness, playfulness, and joyful creativity within the yoga practice.
- Each class begins with an invocation or centering as a devotional recognition of the grace-bestowing power of universal Spirit within and around us.
- Each class has a heart-oriented theme, which has a meaningful connection to the grand spiritual purposes of the asana practice. The theme usually centers on cultivating a virtue—a quality of mind or heart, which is a microcosmic reflection of our Divine nature. Each theme gives a direction for the attitudinal energy that infuses every action and breath in the poses. Effectively, all the poses in Anusara yoga are expressed from the "inside out."
- An elegant, concise set of alignment principles called the "Universal Principles of Alignment" is applied to each asana in the Anusara method. A central idea within the Universal Principles of Alignment is the 3 A's: Attitude, Alignment, and Action. This refers to a foundational concept within the Anusara method in which every pose is infused with a meaningful intention connected to the grand purposes of yoga, awareness of specific postural alignment, and balanced action between stability and freedom. The specific principles include Muscular Energy and Organic Energy, which are the two complementary forces that provide each pose with a balanced action. Secondary alignment principles include Spirals and Loops, which help to bring refinement and precision to each pose.
- Movements and actions within every pose are coordinated with the breath.
- Postural alignments in each pose are checked in reference to the Universal Principles of Alignment. The teacher then gives adjustments verbally and physically to the students in order to enhance their poses.
- Poses are modified or supported with props if necessary to help each student achieve the general form of pose.
- Postural demonstrations may be used when necessary to clarify alignment instructions.
- The Anusara method is designed to serve students of any level of experience or ability, from children to seniors, and students with special therapeutic needs to advanced practitioners.

- There are over 250 poses that compile the syllabi of Anusara yoga asanas. This syllabus encompasses all the poses that are commonly practiced in the foremost hatha yoga styles throughout the world. The syllabus covers all of the key asanas within the major classifications of poses: standing poses, backbends, forward bends, twists, hand-balancings, inversions, and restoratives.
- Practicing variations of the basic poses is encouraged as a full expression of the human spirit.
- Although there are no set postural routines in Anusara yoga, classes are designed using principles of sequencing. One of the principles includes progressively sequencing poses to help students of all levels advance in their practice.
- Classes are concluded with Savasana or meditation or a quiet centering in order to help better assimilate the teachings and honor the spiritual experience of the class. Students are left with a blessing or a reminder on how to continue to embody the heart theme "off the mat" in their daily life.
- Ultimately, we want each student to leave an Anusara yoga class feeling better about him or herself, empowered by the revelation of his or her Divine nature.

The Path of Yoga

Yoga is a powerful path to fulfill all of our deepest spiritual longings.

The purpose and meaning of life has different levels.

Q: What do all people fundamentally want?

A: Happiness, love, health, peace, well-being, inner knowing

A common spiritual longing within all humanity is the desire for freedom from suffering and pain, heart-break and death, war and hatred.

Q: How do we fulfill our most fundamental spiritual desires? What is a tried and true path to that inner fulfillment?

A: Yoga – Union with our true nature, our spiritual essence. It is an ancient path to the ultimate freedom.

A more refined meaning in life comes from understanding the nature of life and the universe.

There are different paths or types of yoga which are summarized as follows:

- Body – Hatha, Karma
  - physical exercises and breathing practices, selfless service.
- Mind – Jnana, Mantra, Raja
  - meditation practices, scriptural study.
- Heart – Bhakti
  - chanting, worship rituals.

Yoga Philosophy

There are different schools of yoga philosophy that have developed over the centuries:

- Classical
  - Freedom by isolating pure awareness (Purusha) from the material world (Prakriti) including mind, emotions, and body.
- Advaita Vedanta
  - Freedom by shifting perception to see Spirit everywhere and seeing everything of difference in this material universe as an illusion.
- Tantra
  - Freedom by aligning with the divine flow simultaneously within the physical experience.

Q: Why is philosophy such a fundamental aspect of our practice?

A: It serves as the vision by which all the energy of the practice is directed in both quality and magnitude of mind and heart.

The Tantric Vision of Anusara Yoga

- The vision of Anusara is grounded in a Tantric philosophy of intrinsic goodness. In this philosophy we take the premise that everything in this world is an embodiment of Supreme Consciousness, which at its essence pulsates with goodness and the highest bliss.
- The highest intention of practicing Anusara yoga is to align with the Divine. As we deepen our alignment with the Divine, we step deeper into the flow of Grace. It is through the revelatory power of Grace that we awaken to the truth that this Divine flow is our essential nature. This higher knowledge naturally fuels our deepest desire to lovingly serve the creative flow of life through each breath and posture in our yoga practice. On our yoga mat we artistically offer our individual light and our unique music with the heartfelt prayer of adding more beauty, love, and goodness to the world.
- We want to know the delight that is our true nature, and we want to exult in that delight through a myriad of creative expression.
- Our highest intention is to see and experience the universal everywhere and in everything, within and without in the full range of diversity.
- The art of Anusara yoga is a co-participation with the Supreme—not a practice of domination, subjugation, or control of nature. Instead of trying to control the body and mind from the outside, the poses originate from a deep creative and devotional feeling inside.

Two Main Purposes for Practicing Anusara Yoga

1. Self-knowledge – (Chit)

   Awakening, recognition, remembrance, self-realization, enlightenment, discovering the bliss of being (Shiva)

2. Delight of creative expression – (Ananda)

   To enjoy the freedom of being. To make beauty, to love, to exult in the goodness of life, to celebrate the Supreme through art/music, to serve by adding more joy and laughter to life. (Shakti)

Tantric Metaphysics

Metaphysics provides the map of the terrain of life and the universe. You have to know what the divine is in order to align with it.

Metaphysics helps to answer the questions: What is the Universe? What is the Body/Mind? What is the physical world?

Overview of Anusara Yoga Metaphysics

- The universe is all one Supreme Consciousness. It is simultaneously both the absolute world of pure spirit and relative world of the physical. It encompasses the full spectrum of everything at once - the worlds of the unmanifest and the manifest, the unlimited and the limited, the immeasurable and the measurable.
- Anusara encompasses a vision of totality in which every part of each person is seen as equally divine. The body and mind are various limited forms of divine embodiment through which we may experience the ecstasy of recognizing and glorifying the unbounded One in the world of the many. The physical body is a magnificent manifestation of Spirit, not simply an inferior material vessel. It is through the limitations of the body/mind that we discover that our true nature is boundless.
- Similarly, our thoughts, desires, passions and emotions are not obstacles to spiritual awakening which need to be squelched or eliminated, but instead they are God-given means of glorifying and expanding our experience of the Supreme. Ultimately, the body/mind is a divine gift to help us discover our glory, our greatness, and our worthiness to experience the highest sense of freedom.
- Embodiment is not some sort of karmic punishment, nor something we need to transcend. Moreover, although this material body/mind is ever-changing, it is not an illusion, nor a mistake of one's perception. It is actually a real phenomenon that is pulsing with the sublime essence of the Supreme. Through skillfully playing with the limitations of the body, the ultimate freedom can be experienced.
- Life is good. Indeed, goodness is the absolute nature of the universe. There is no intrinsic or absolute evil in the universe. However, because we are born free to choose our own experience, human beings are capable of mistakes and deliberate malevolence—moving out of alignment with the Divine in a way that creates suffering and harm. Although nothing has a malevolent or evil essence at its absolute nature, goodness takes on a relative state in the world of manifestation. In other words, not everything in the material world is as good as everything else, yet within the absolute, nothing has a bad essence.

The Ethics of Anusara Yoga

- The harmony and integrity of the Anusara yoga community is maintained by adhering to a set of ethical guidelines. Our community is held together by everyone's implicit alliance to the spiritual principles of Anusara yoga philosophy, such as celebrating beauty in all its diversity, truthfulness, and honoring the creative freedom of the Divine in all beings. Everyone is aligned with the truth that Grace plays the key role in the successful flow of their practice, classes, and the community itself.
- Anusara yoga's Tantric philosophical vision offers a life-affirming path for both living in the outer world and for exploring the most subtle realms of inner consciousness.

- Anusara's alignment is to the Supreme, which vibrates as the essence of everything. It is life itself. So, we support anything that is life-enhancing and life-affirming. The essence of this life includes joy, goodness, beauty, love, freedom, and truth. So, whatever enhances and expands these aspects of the Supreme in the material world above their antithetical aspects, is then deemed ethical in Anusara.
- Anusara is flowing with Grace by saying "yes" to the whole magical spectrum of life. It is a willingness to be aware of all parts of ourselves—the light and the dark, the full rainbow of sensation, perception, emotion, and thought. Saying yes to life means to openly sense and know each moment fully without prejudging it. We simply open our hearts to the present moment without clinging or pushing.
- Whatever we encounter, whether it is auspicious or malicious, good or bad, uplifting or disheartening, we respond in ways that are more life-affirming. To be in the flow is to feel the moment fully and then to choose to act in ways that celebrate the essence of life, Spirit, and our hearts.
- A key aspect of the Anusara yoga practice is about deepening the relationship with the Supreme in the form of the outer world in order to experience an ever-growing joy through the expansion and revelation of our divine consciousness.
- The relationship with the Supreme is deepened by purifying and refining body, mind, and emotions to more fully reflect the Divine in each of these individual aspects of one's being. Furthermore, when the senses and the mind are more purified and refined, then one is able to more clearly perceive the Universal in everything in this relative world. Any degree of direct perception of the light of the Universal Consciousness provides an immediate taste of the boundless joy and beauty of the essence of the Universal. In Anusara we enthusiastically seek to develop and refine all parts of ourselves: body; mind, including our reasoning and intuitive capacities
- We seek to develop and refine our emotions, including the deepest virtues of our heart, in order to more fully express and exalt in the Supreme through our individuality.
- Everything in life, all relationships, experiences, thoughts, and feelings, can be experienced as a gateway to the bliss of the Universal. The Tantric practice is particularly effective with playing the edge of very challenging situations and circumstances which could easily knock the yogi out of alignment with his heart. The big categories of these difficult situations include the use of sexual energy, money, personal power, and consciousness-altering ingestible substances, such as addictive drugs or alcohol. Tantra teaches how to engage in every circumstance and relationship in ways that transform the experience from something which might lead one out of alignment with his highest purpose and then to suffering, into a powerfully life-enhancing situation which is more connected to the Universal. This is the scientific Tantric art of transforming a potentially poisonous situation into life-expanding nectar. The proper application of the Tantric teachings to any situation strengthens and more deeply centers the yogi to effectively stay connected to the Universal Shakti throughout the wild roller coaster of life. Each situation in life becomes an opportunity for the Anusara yogi to further polish the mirror of her body, mind, and heart. The more the dirty film on the mirror of her being is cleared away, the brighter that the Universal Light can reflect through her.
- In Tantra we don't avoid or abstain from worldly pleasure (bhoga) or enjoyment necessarily, nor do we indulge. We don't try to transcend this world since we view it as the embodiment of the divine. The pleasures of life are many times slowed vibratory forms of Ananda. So, we delightfully explore life through the senses instead of trying to subdue the senses in order to transcend worldly life.
- One can enjoy worldly delights without clinging to them. However, the practice of playing with pleasures poses risks. Yet, the reward of directly experiencing the essence of Consciousness is so high that Tantrikas take the risk of diving into the field of shadow and light, pain and pleasure. So, in Anusara we attempt to live with great passion but without attachment, and without excess or aberration.

- Through our Anusara yoga practice we cultivate an ability to clearly discriminate between what is life-enhancing and what is not. We then use our power of discrimination and judgment to align with the good in order to reduce suffering, diminish ugliness, dissolve hatred, and conversely to exult in the splendor of life and our inherent auspiciousness.
- In Anusara we want to turn the ordinary, mundane, profane moments into the sacred and divine. We attempt to use every circumstance even the painful, challenging, ugly ones as gateways to deepen our experience of our divine nature. So, some pain, sadness, chaos, violence, lies, bondage, anger, and fear might be used to ultimately expand the greater freedom of the flow of the Supreme in this world. Our intention is to use the minimum amount of these shadow elements necessary to exult in the Supreme's embodiment. Everything must be considered in the greater context to determine the proper use of shadow and light to allow the Shakti to optimally expand in each particular situation. It is all situational and relative to context. There is a dance, a give and take between shadow and light, between manifestation and dissolution, all the time, and yet the constant is Supreme Consciousness.
- We choose to have a dance of energy exchange between one and another in ways in which it is fair and beneficial for both. There is often a power differential between two people in a relationship: employer - employee; vendor/server - customer; teacher - student; parent - child. Yet even with the inherent power differential, the relationship can flourish when the exchange of energy is balanced. When the energy exchange is balanced there is a proper and healthy give and take between the two and Shri is exulted.
- Anusara is a true middle path that opens to the extremes along the spectrum yet seeks the balance point in the middle in every moment.
- We differentiate between fulfillment of our spiritual desires vs. gratification of our physical desires. All of our short-term physical desires and wants are put into the larger context of how their gratification may serve our long-term spiritual desires and intentions. So, gratification of physical desires is not a problem unless fulfillment of our spiritual desires is diminished or blocked in any way.

Tantric Cosmology and the Nature of the Universe

From the Tantric viewpoint everything in the Universe is essentially Supreme Consciousness. The Universe is comprised of both absolute and relative worlds of existence. The entire Universe can be organized into 36 principles or levels of existence (tattvas). There are 5 tattvas of the absolute world + 6 tattvas of the psychical world + 25 tattvas of the relative world.

The 25 tattvas of the physical, relative world were first delineated in the Samkhya philosophical system. Then these 25 tattvas were assimilated into Tantric cosmology and an additional 11 tattvas were added by the Tantric philosophical systems.

The 36 Principles

- Absolute Reality
  - Shiva - Shakti
  - Sadashiva, Ishvara, Shuddhavidya
- Relative Reality
  - Maya
  - 5 Kanchukas (coverings)

- Purusha – Prakriti
- 3 Levels of Mind
- 5 Jnanendriyas (Sense Organs)
- 5 Karmendriyas (Organs of Action)
- 5 Tanmatras (Subtle Elements)
- 5 Mahabhutas (the 5 Elements)

The Absolute - Nature of Ultimate Reality

Shiva-Shakti

One, singular Supreme Spirit

- Supreme Consciousness - Limitless Creative Potential
  - Supreme Consciousness that vibrates with unbounded creative Power and Bliss.

Essential Attributes of the Absolute

- Chit – Consciousness and Self Awareness
- Ananda – Bliss of Creative Power
- Shri – Auspiciousness of Creative Power
- Svatantrya – Ultimate Freedom
- Purnatva – Fullness, Peace, Perfection
- Spanda – Pulsation, Polarity of Energies

Prakasha - Vimarsha – sub-attribute of Shiva-Shakti that is a reflection of the Pulsation of supreme Self-Awareness.

- Prakasha – self-luminosity, the light of consciousness.
- Vimarsha – self-reflective power, self-referential, the mirror of consciousness which reflects its own light. Reflection of consciousness or mind that happens within itself.

Five Key Aspects of the One

Chit, Ananda, Iccha, Jnana, and Kriya (the 5 Tattvas of absolute reality)

- Chit (Shiva) – Supreme Consciousness, Absolute Auspiciousness
  - Eternity
- Ananda (Shakti) – Supreme creative Power
  - Omnipresence, unbounded Freedom
- Iccha – Will/Desire – Fullness of Heart, fullness of being, fulfillment
  - Sense of wonder/mystery before activity/manifestation.
  - Sat – Truth, ultimate existence, ISness, Being.
  - I Am This (Sadashiva)
- Jnana – Knowing (omniscience) – power of identification.
  - Knowing of one's state of consciousness.

  - Chit – luminous, self-aware, consciousness
  - This I Am (Ishvara)
- Kriya – Doing (omnipotence)
  - Ananda – free and independent, the expression of what IS, bliss.
  - The ocean of consciousness is constantly trembling with the highest Delight.
  - This and I (Shuddhavidya)

The Relative World – Embodiment, the Microcosm

- Why does the unlimited One embody Itself into limited existence?
- Why does God create?
- What is the purpose of life?
- How does this relative world come into being?

Why?

- All of creation is divinely danced into existence for the sheer delight and the play (lila) of embodying the Supreme's own blissful nature (Ananda).
- When the subject looks in the mirror it sees its reflection and thereby gains more knowledge about itself. So, Shiva limits himself to expand his experience and knowledge of himself. The Immortal has chosen to become mortal to gain greater knowledge and delight of itself.

How?

- Shiva creates a mirror within Himself onto which He projects His light of consciousness in order to make the world appear.
  - This world is a reflection (pratibimba) within the mirror of the Supreme. The manifested world is a real appearance. It is not imagined. The photo or image in the mirror actually exists, but it isn't the ultimately real, ideal, or archetypal subject.
- Everything comes into being in this world from this creative dance of Shiva and Shakti. The One becomes Two and then the Many.
- Everything in this world is a relative dance between contrary complements. Positive and negative, masculine and feminine are chasing each other in order to try to unite again. The essence of life in the physical world seeks union and balance, while also moving out into diversity and difference.
- The Universal chooses to step into manifestation by instantaneously creating progressively slower vibratory levels of Its unbounded creative light.
- Out of Its intrinsic freedom and unbounded joy the One creates difference and differentiation within Itself through cloaking and veiling.

The relative world moves in and out of manifestation by the Absolute's spanda.

- So Ham – the pulse, the breath of the Supreme
- Liberating and Manifesting currents of Nature
- Evolution/Involution
- Yes/No – expansion/contraction of Shiva
- Light and Shadow
- Pleasure and Pain
- Freedom and Bondage

This pulsation of condensing and extending creative energy moves in cycles, spirals, and circles.

Cycles of Nature

AUM – the primordial sound of the manifest universe composed of 3 sounds representing 3 stages of the creative cycle (creation, sustenance, and dissolution) surrounded in the 4th aspect of supreme silence. From the silence the sound of creation arises and to the silence the sound returns.

- Out of the dark, amorphous sea of chaotic creative Shakti organized forms of divine light and sound arise. (Saraswati)
- The pulse of creative light continues to evolve in manifestation to progressively more refined and sophisticated forms. (Lakshmi)
    - Shri – divine beauty, abundant divine light, the splendor inherent in life.
- At the height of the manifested cycle the refined form begins to dissolve and eventually returns back to the dark chaotic sea of energy from which it came. (Kali)

The manifested world arises from the Ananda Tandava, or the dance of bliss of Shiva, the Cosmic Dancer (Nataraja). The form of Shiva as Nataraja symbolizes the five divine acts (pancha krityas) of creation, sustenance, dissolution, concealment and bestowment of grace.

5 Divine Acts of Shiva

- Creation, Sustenance, Dissolution, Concealment, and Revelation.
    - Creation (Srsti) – is the stepping down in vibration from the subtle into the gross. Spirit into Matter. Manifesting current.
    - Sustenance (Sthiti) – the energy that holds the form together and gives the appearance of solidity.
    - Dissolution (Samhara) – the outer is dissolved back into the inner. The gross is dissolved back into the subtle. Difference into unity. Matter into Spirit. Liberating current.

Concealment vs. Revelation – vilaya and anugraha

- Mystery and Insight
- Ignorance (Avidya) and Awakening
- Forgetting and Remembering

Grace – the power of revelation

- Guru – gu (darkness) related to the gunas. Ru (light) related to "devoid of form."
  From darkness to light.

  When darkness meets light it disappears.

  When hatred meets pure love it dissolves.

The power that conceals or blocks can also be thought of as Guru tattva, since every part of the cycle is Shiva.

Guru literally means, "the weighty one." – condensed Shakti that warps space/time by its massive energy of consciousness, like the gravitational field of a giant star or even a black hole.

Maya

It is the Supreme's power to cloak or veil Itself. Therefore, it is the first principle of the world of manifestation. It is power that makes the Immeasurable measurable, and the Infinite finite. It is the differentiating power of the universe.

From Maya, the 6th tattva, arise the next 5 tattvas, the Kanchukas, which form our atma (soul), our sense of spiritual individuality.

5 Kanchukas - Cloaks

- Kala – limits omnipotence (Kriya),
  creates limited agency or the capacity to act.
- Vidya – limits omniscience (Jnana)
  creates limited knowledge.
- Raga – limits fullness of heart (Iccha)
  creates desire and longing to be full again.
- Niyati – limits omnipresence, freedom of creative power and expression (Shakti)
  creates fabric of Space, and the energetic tapestry of causality.
- Kala – limits eternal awareness (Shiva)
  creates time, and the sense of sequential awareness.

The 3 Malas

Mala – dust, dirt, film on the mirror of the Heart. Arising from Maya's Shakti.

- Anava mala is associated with Raga and the veiling of Iccha Shakti. Creates the feeling of lack, unworthiness, incompleteness, sadness. Related to the water element (Ap) and the dosha of Kapha.
- Mayiya mala is associated with Vidya and the veiling of Jnana Shakti. Creates the perception of separation and difference without connection to unity which can lead to conflict, anger and hatred. Related to the fire element (Agni) and the dosha of Pitta.
- Karma mala is associated with Kala and the veiling of Kriya Shakti. Creates the sense of doership, and the feeling of distress from not being able to accomplish actions; anxiety and fear of not having the resources and the ability to create. Related to air element (Vayu) and the dosha of Vata.
  - When pure awareness (Shiva) gets cloaked to the gross level of mind, which is linear in thinking, then differentiating, judgmental, argumentative behavior arises.
  - Pure power of bliss (Shakti) gets cloaked to the gross level of heart, which then reflected in unstable emotions, and undiscerning, misperceiving, disharmonious feelings.

The 9 Rasas

Shanta – Peace	calmness, fulfillment, contentment, relaxation	(Water)
Shringara – Love	erotic love, desire, devotion, divine beauty, admiration	(Fire)
Hasya – Joy	humor, comic happiness, satire, sarcasm, exuberance	(Air)
Karuna – Compassion	pity, empathy, light sadness	(Water)
Vira – Courage	heroism, confidence, pride, fiery disappointment	(Fire)
Adhuta – Wonder	curiosity, astonishment, thrill of mystery	(Air)
Vibhatsa – Disgust	repugnance, self-loathing, heavy depression	(Water)
Raudra – Anger	fury, irritation, violence, hostile rage	(Fire)
Bhayanaka – Fear	worry, anxiety, distress, paranoia, disabling terror	(Air)

Water	Fire	Air
Shanta	Shringara	Hasya
Karuma	Vira	Adhuta
Vibhatsa	Raudra	Bhayanaka

The 25 Tattvas of the Samkhya System

(metaphysical basis of Classical Yoga and Ayurveda)

25 = Purusha + Prakriti + 3 aspects of Mind + 20 tattvas of the physical body +

the 11 Tantric Tattvas (the 5 absolute Tattvas + Maya + the 5 Kanchuckas) = 36

Purusha – Prakriti

Purusha

- Spirit/male principle – Ascending/expanding

Prakriti

- Matter/female principle – Descending/condensing

  Purusha is created by Maya with the 5 Kanchukas.

  Prakriti is the material covering for the Purusha.

In the Tantric cosmology equal and opposite energies are required for manifesting. This is a significant difference from the Classical view of Yoga where Purusha is considered superior to Prakriti.

The 3 Gunas – essential qualities of Nature

The Gunas help to describe qualities of material things and activities. Everything in this physical world is a compilation of the gunas.

- Tamas – condensing/cooling/slowing/darkness/downward
  - Stillness, quiet, inertia – related to earth/water
- Rajas – expanding/heating/accelerating/upward
  - Activating, stimulating, dynamism – related to fire/air
- Sattva – balancing/optimizing – light, luminosity

Corresponding to matter, energy, and light (Consciousness)

Tamas, Rajas, Sattva

Union of Opposites:

Q: What is balance? What is optimal?

A: Whatever enhances and affirms life in any particular circumstance of time and place.

A: Yoga - the reconciliation of opposites, the divine marriage of contrary complements.

3 Levels of Mind

1. Buddhi – spiritual intelligence; Light of the Soul power of discrimination, judgment, intuition.
   - Iccha (willing) - Heart - knows what is dharmic.
2. Ahamkara – sense of ego or individuality. A psychic bridge between the Light of the Soul and the Mind-Body, a filter between the Higher Mind and the lower Mind.
   - Jnana (knowing) - Mind - identifies with the process of the act.
3. Manas – organs of cognition, stores and processes information, linear processes of mind, rational mind.
   - Kriya (feeling) - Body - knows how to act, how to do.

20 Tattvas of the Physical Body

5 Sense organs – (Jnanendriyas)

- Ears - auditory, hearing
- Skin - tactile, touching
- Eyes - visual, seeing
- Tongue - gustatory, tasting
- Nose - olfactory, smelling

5 organs of action – (Karmendriyas)

- Mouth / throat - Speaking
- Hands - Touching, feeling
- Feet - Moving, ambulating
- Genitals - Recreating, procreating
- Eliminative organs - Eliminating, excreting

5 Subtle elements – (Tanmatras)

- Shabda - energy of vibration (sound-as-such)
- Sparsha - energy of impact (touch-as-such)
- Rupa - energy of light and form (form-as-such)
- Rasa - energy of viscous attraction (taste-as-such)
- Gandha - energy of cohesive attraction (smell-as-such)

5 Elements – (Mahabhutas)

Space, Air, Fire, Water, Earth

5 different colors for the Grand Artist to paint with.

The 5 Elements offer a gateway to beauty, freedom, and pleasure.

- Space (Akasha) – clear, soft, immeasurable, unbounded, no dimension, vibration, freedom, provides the playground for unconditional love, non-directional, all-pervading, subtle, expansive, field containing purpose, related to volume, nuclear energy.
- Air (Vayu) – mobile, dry, vectors of direction, rough, rarefied, light (upward), electrical energy, Space in motion, responsiveness of nervous system.
- Fire (Agni) – sharp, hot, penetrating, dry, light (upward), bright, transformational, comprehension, understanding, light that allows movement from place to place (can see where you are walking), selectivity, Air particles create friction then Fire.
- Water (Ap) – dull, soft, liquid, viscous, clear, downward moving, adhesive, cohesive, chemical energy, assimilation, allowing for life, Fire dissolved certain parts of Space into Water.
- Earth (Prithivi) – heavy, dull, static, dense, solid, hard, inert, gross, cohesive attraction, gravitational, mechanical energy, downward, Water solidified to create Earth.
- Every physical substance has all 5 elements.
  i.e. Water – ice, water, fire to steam, into space.

Subtle Body Anatomy

5 Sheaths (koshas) – Inner Body/Outer Body

- Annamaya kosha - earth physical, body of food
- Pranamaya kosha - water pranic, body of the vital force
- Manomaya kosha - fire rational, linear mind / instincts, emotions
- Vijnanamaya kosha - air intuitive mind, wisdom
- Anandamaya kosha - space pure spirit, body of bliss

Inner Body – the energy blueprint for the physical body.

- There is a deep order to the energetic structure of the Inner Body.

Cosmic Energy – Shakti in the body

- Shakti is the creative energy of Shiva that vibrates in everything in the universe at various levels of frequency. In the body/mind, Shakti's general form that vibrates as vitality or life itself is called Prana. Associated with the mind and the nervous system, Shakti is like an electrical force.
- Kundalini (coiled one) is an extremely condensed and potent form of Shakti in the body. If prana is like electromagnetism, then Kundalini is like nuclear energy.
- Prana and Kundalini are supremely intelligent. The Shakti in the body organizes Herself depending on space and time.
- Prana is the vital force in our bodies. It interpenetrates and pulsates within every cell—giving life to our body. Prana enlivens and coordinates all bodily functions. Every particle of the physical body, every molecule of DNA, every cell, every organ, and every gland pulsates with prana. The heart throbs, the diaphragm rises and falls, and biochemicals flow in a harmonic symphony, all due to the pulsation of prana in the body.

  Prana is the energetic movement of our minds:

  - Prana provides for our awareness, perception, sensations, feelings, thoughts, and emotions.
  - If the prana is disturbed or agitated, the mind also will be agitated. Establishing a steady, easy pranic flow in the body will cause the mind to become steady, quiet, and undisturbed.

The Breath

The Breath as a form of the universal energy in the body.

- Represents the finite form of Universal Shakti. The breath is the Goddess dancing within us. It is ultimately in charge. We cannot ultimately govern the vast energy behind the breath by natural means. For example, if you attempt to hold your breath forever, you will eventually pass out, and your breathing will begin again automatically.
- We honor the breath as the embodiment of the Goddess, Chitshakti, the infinite creative power that pervades the entire universe. She exhales into us when we are born and inhales Herself completely out of us when we die. We are actually being breathed by a greater power. She is the lead dancer of life, seeking a dance partner in us. If we follow in harmony with the natural movements of the breath, we can participate in the creation of a magical and wondrous dance with Her.
- With this understanding, breathe with great humility, care, and joy. Let the master dancer lead the way, and follow as best you can so that the dance appears as one singular expression of harmony and joy. Thus, instead of trying to be ultimately in charge of the breath, simply dance with Her in ways that enhance the pranic flow in the mind/body.

Spatial Orientation/Direction

Shakti takes embodiment in space and time in a deeply organized way. By knowing the spatial alignment principles of Shakti in the body we can then align with Her in much greater ways.

Core lines in the body:

- The body looks like a five-pointed star with the axial trunk of the torso and then the neck and the arms and legs extending out of central core line. So, the core lines are the big central lines through the main parts of the body—through the torso and out through the neck and head, and through the arms and legs, then out through each finger and toe.

The 36 Tattvas of Tantric Cosmology Chart

The Absolute Tattvas
The Universal - Ultimate Reality
Macrocosmic Consciousness

Paramshiva

1. **Shiva**
Supreme Consciousness

2. **Shakti**
Power of Consciousness

3. **Sadashiva**
Iccha
willpower

4. **Isvara**
Jnana
knowledge

5. **Suddhavidya**
Kriya
action

Sat-Cit-Ānanda
Being-Consciousness-Bliss

Psychical Tattvas
Microcosmic Consciousness

6. **Māyā** - differentiating power of the universe

5 Kanchukas - Cloaks

7. **Kalā** - limits omnipotence (Kriya), creates limited agency or the capacity to act
8. **Vidya** - limits omniscience (Jnana) creates limited knowledge
9. **Raga** - limits fullness of heart; (Iccha) creates desire and longing to be full again
10. **Niyati** - limits omnipresence freedom of creative power and expression (Shakti) creates fabric of Space, and the energetic tapestry of causality
11. **Kāla** - limits eternal awareness (Shiva) creates time, and the sense of sequential awareness

---

Physical Tattvas
The Relative World

12. **Purusha**
Male Principle

13. **Prakriti**
Female Principle

14. **Buddhi** - intelligence
15. **Ahamkāra** - ego sense
16. **Manas** - mental functions

Jnanendriyas
Five sense organs

17. **Ears** - auditory, hearing
18. **Skin** - tactile, feeling, touch
19. **Eyes** - visual, seeing
20. **Tongue** - gustatory, tasting
21. **Nose** - olfactory, smelling

Karmendriyas
Five action organs

22. **Mouth** - speaking
23. **Hands** - touching
24. **Feet** - ambulating
25. **Genitals** - procreating
26. **Bowels** - eliminating

Tanmatras
Five subtle elements

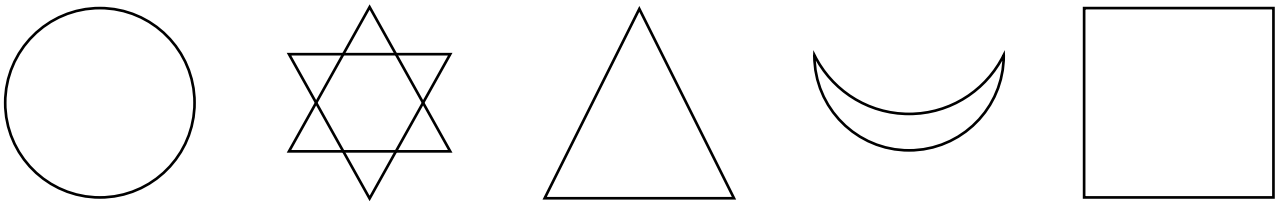
27. **Shabda** - Energy of vibration (sound-as-such)
28. **Sparsha** - Energy of Impact (touch-as-such)
29. **Rūpa** - Energy of light and form (form-as-such)
30. **Rasa** - Energy of viscous attraction (taste-as-such)
31. **Gandha** - Energy of cohesive attraction (smell-as-such)

Mahabhutas
Five gross elements

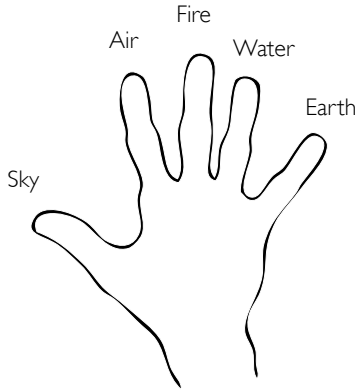
32. **Space** (Ākāsha)
33. **Air** (Vāyu)
34. **Fire** (Agni)
35. **Water** (Ap)
36. **Earth** (Prithivi)

Tantric Tattva Correspondences Chart

Tattva	Subject/Object	Supreme Attribute	Kanchuchas
Shiva - Supreme Consciousness	I	Eternity	Kāla - Time
Shakti - Creative Power of the Supreme	AM	Omnipresence/ Freedom	Niyati - Space
Iccha - Divine Will	I AM This	Purna - Fullness	Raga - Desire
Jnana - Divine Knowledge	This I AM	Omniscience	Vidya - Limited Knowledge
Kriya - Divine Action	This and I	Omnipotence	Kāla - Limited Agency



Tattva	5 Elements	3 Malas	3 Doshas
Shiva - Supreme Consciousness	Sky		
Shakti - Creative Power of the Supreme	Earth		
Iccha - Divine Will	Water	Anava	Kapha
Jnana - Divine Knowledge	Fire	Mayiya	Pitta
Kriya - Divine Action	Air	Karma	Vata



Jnanendriyas	Karmendriyas	Tanmatras	Mahabhutas
Ears	Mouth / speaking	Shabda - sound	Space
Skin	Hands / touching	Sparsha - touch	Air
Eyes	Feet / ambulating	Rūpa - color	Fire
Tongue	Genitals / procreating	Rasa - flavor	Water
Nose	Bowels / eliminating	Gandha - smell	Earth

There is a polar orientation to the organization of energy in manifestation.

Male – Female
Up – Down
Right – Left
Front – Back
Sky – Earth
Out – In
External – Internal

Prana – in; Apana – out.

East –	hot, sharp, bright (solar)	above –	Air
West –	cool, (lunar)	below –	Earth
North –	colder (lunar)	back/left –	Water
South –	hotter (solar)	front/right –	Fire

Southeast – Fire
Southwest – Earth
Northwest – Air
Northeast – Water
Center – Space

Front body – the known, individual
Back body – the unknown, the mystery, raw, universal

East – front body
West – back body
South – base of spine (Muladhara)
North – top of head (Sahasrara)

The body begins on the back. The face starts on the back of the head.

Vertical – masculine
Horizontal – feminine

Square unfolded – cross (vertical and horizontal)

Inner Spiral – creates horizontal space
Outer Spiral – creates vertical space

Upper half – universal
Lower half – individual

Pranic System

Nadis – subtle channels of prana that vibrate (from nada – sound)

- Strings on a cosmic musical instrument.
- Microcosm of the universal process of creation. Various emotions and mind states relate to sections or strata in the body.

Kanda – bulb or nexus of energy from which the nadis originate.

- Found in the belly near the navel along the Sushumna.
- 72,000 – 350,000 nadis arise from the kanda.

Sushumna – vertical channel - Midline

Ida – Moon - left
Pingala – Sun - right

Sympathetic and Parasympathetic nervous system

- Afferent and efferent nerves

Prana dynamism releases 3 forms of energy:

- Light (Laghima)
- Mind (Anima – power to become very small, subtle – in between the frames of life's movie.)
- Matter (Mahima – power of magnification.)

5 Primary Pranas:

• Prana	– Space	– Downward, inward	– fills the space
• Udana	– Air	– Upward	– moves upward
• Samana	– Fire	– Linear	– Viveka - separating
• Vyana	– Water	– Circular	– pulsation, throbbing
• Apana	– Earth	– Downward, outward	– concentrated/focus

5 Secondary Pranas:

- Naga – causes burping
- Kurma – causes blinking of the eyes
- Krikara – causes sneezing and coughing
- Devadatta – causes yawning
- Dhanamjaya – causes dissolution of the corpse after death

Chakras

Wheels of energy that receive, assimilate, transmit Shakti on various levels of experience/ consciousness.

1. Muladhara - Earth; gravitation drawing into a point; survival, desire to be here in the physical world; Trust; grounding, stability, (Shakti)
    - Desire for the necessities to survive and exist.
        - Self-preservation
    - excessive (+) – overly possessive; fearful mother
    - deficient (-) – homeless; ungrounded; victim
2. Svadhisthana - Water; polarity; relationship; sexuality; pleasure; feeling.
    - Desire for emotional/sexual expression.
        - Self-enjoyment/gratification
    - (+) – manipulative and controlling like a lustful Emperor
    - (-) – co-dependent; martyr; submissive
3. Manipura - Fire; combustion; individual willpower; self-esteem; vitality; personality.
    - Desire to express our individuality.
        - Self-identification
    - (+) – egotistical, self-absorbed; ambitious self-driven warrior
    - (-) – poor self-worth; sensitive servant; feels disliked

4. Anahata - Air; equilibrium; love; balanced emotions; open-hearted.
    - Desire for love
        - Self-acceptance
    - (+) – inappropriate emotional expression
        - poor emotional boundaries; ingenuous actor
    - (-) – ruthless, no heart, can't feel emotions
5. Vishuddha - Sound; vibration; communication, creativity (life-affirming)
    - Desire to speak and hear the truth.
        - Self-expression
    - (+) – willful; controlling; judgmental; hurtful speech
    - (-) – lacking faith; unable to creatively express; silent child
6. Ajna - Light; luminosity; intuition; psychic perception; clear seeing; wisdom
    - Desire to see the unity in diversity.
        - Self-reflection
    - (+) – overly intellectual; overly analytical;
    - (-) – unclear thought; deluded
7. Sahasrara - Bliss of Pure Consciousness, cognition; spiritual connection (Shiva)
    - Desire to know the essence of oneself/universe.
        - Self-knowledge
    - (+) – Cult leader; ego maniac
    - (-) – no spiritual inspiration

The Physical Body

The physical body has an Optimal Blueprint.

- The form and shape of the physical body is patterned according to a subtle energetic blueprint which exists, like an ethereal double, for each person's body. The physical body grows and develops according to the subtle form of the Optimal Blueprint, which changes with age and with a conscious effort to transform the body through exercise, bodywork, and nutrition. The Blueprint also reflects genetic propensities, age, diet, exercise, rest, and other aspects of lifestyle.
- This Optimal Blueprint is the master design for the body's potential for optimal alignment and health. It represents the ideal spatial pattern of the body in any position. For every possible position that the energetic and physical bodies can assume, there is a specific alignment where circulation of vital energy (prana), blood, and other internal fluids have an optimally healthy flow. The Optimal Blueprint represents this ideal alignment of the body in any position. It is like the alignment of an antenna; adjusting parts of the antenna has a direct effect on the quality of the signal received—one position creates music, while another creates static.
- When the outer body is aligned with the Optimal Blueprint, the body senses this. The connective tissue becomes stronger, more resilient, and increases in flexibility while the internal circulation, including prana, increases. Simply moving the outer body toward synchronization with the Optimal Blueprint improves the flow of all body energies.

  Midline – axis of the body

The body is bilaterally symmetrical. Brain has two sides, 2 arms, 2 sides of genitals, 2 eyes, 2 ears, 2 nostils, 2 sides of the lungs, 2 legs.

- Right side – sun (masculine)
- Left side – moon (feminine)

Core lines in the body.

4 Corners – shoulders and hips

Midsection – top of the diaphragm, bottom of the heart

- Divides the sky and earth, upper and lower halves of the body.
- The place of the heart with 3 transcendental chakras above and 3 immanent chakras below.

Skeletal Structure

Axial and Appendicular – 206 bones total

- Axial: 80 bones total
  - Skull – 28 bones
  - Torso – 52 bones
    - Spine – 26 bones
    - Ribs – 24
    - Sternum – 1
    - Hyoid – 1
- Appendicular: 126 bones
  - Upper and Lower
    - Hands – 2 X 27 = 54 bones
    - Feet – 2 X 26 = 52 bones
    - 2 each of the following: (20 total)
      - scapula – hip
      - humerus – femur
      - clavicle – patella
      - radius – fibula
      - ulna – tibia

There is an optimal relationship between the bones of the body. Principles of Alignment must be applied to move the body toward the Optimal Blueprint. The essence of spirit within the body wants to reflect the highest intelligence and beauty of Consciousness.

Optimal Blueprint in General Form of All Poses

Legs

- Tadasana leg
- Standing square leg
- Dhanurasana leg
- Rajakapotasana leg
- Ustrasana leg

- Full backbend leg
- Cobra leg
- Dandasana leg
- Marichyasana leg
- Padmasana leg
- Baddha Konasana leg
- Baby Cradle leg
- Gomukhasana leg
- Garudasana leg
- Malasana leg
- Janu Sirsasana leg
- Virasana leg
- Mulabandhasana leg
- Deep lunge - back leg

Feet

- Tadasana foot – flexed and pointed ("flointed")
  - All corners of foot balanced in ME and OE.
- Janu Sirsasana foot
  - Inner and outer edges of the foot evenly extended
  - Outer edge of the foot facing the earth
- Virasana foot
- Padmasana foot
- Baddha Konasana foot
- Lunge foot
- Mulabandhasana foot

Arms

5 main positions of the upper arm bone (humerus)

- Overhead

  Straight arms - Urdhva Dhanurasana, Handstand, Parsvakonasana, Vira I, Down Dog

  Bent arms – Pincha Mayurasana, Dwi Pada Viparita Dandasana
- Along side – Chaturanga Dandasana, arms in sitting meditation, Anjali Mudra, Urdhva Mukha Svanasana
- Side plane – Vira II, Vasishtasana
- Front plane – Sirsasana (bent), Plank pose, hand-balancings (straight)
- Back plane – Purvottanasana (straight), Sarvangasana (bent), Gomukhasana (bent), clasping behind the back poses

Hands

- Downward Facing Dog hand
- Grasping hand
- Clasping hands
- Interlocked hands

Neck and Head

- Tadasana neck
- Twisting neck (turning head side to side)
- Jalandhara neck – head tipped forward (Jalandhara Bandha)
  Ex: Adho Mukha Svanasana, Sarvangasana, Setu Bandha
- Backbend neck
  1. neck long (Inner Body bright)
  2. hyoid back
  3. head back with Shoulder Loop
  4. Skull Loop
  5. Organic extension

Fundamentals of Practice

- Sacred space, time
  Q: What is sacred space?
  A: Infusing space with intention to align with the Divine.
- Food, clothing
- Cultivating sensitivity, discrimination, and wisdom
- The need for a teacher

Studentship

Adhikara – competency, qualifications of a student/disciple.

5 Attributes:

- Space/Sky – beginner's mind, humility, openness, pure intention to align with the divine, to serve the divine.
- Air – intellectual dexterity, creative diversity.
- Fire – power of aspiring to transform and evolve, desire/will, full of drive, confidence.
- Water – fluid, accommodating, receptive, reflective, nurturing, sensitive, kind,
- Earth – steadfast, consistent, patient, regular, full of stamina, supportive.
- Degree of the student's intensity – mild, medium, intense.

Measuring the Efficacy of the Practice

How do we measure whether the practice is fulfilling our highest intentions?

How is progress on the path measured?

The fruit of the practice is primarily measured in terms of the degree of cultivation in the depth and expansion of our divine experience/consciousness in all aspects of our lives. Depth is essentially about the level of quality of experience, not just quantity.

Progress on the path of awakening is reflected in an increase in one's:

- spiritual centeredness; inner strength and steadfastness – an abiding sense and knowing of one's spiritual essence.
- trust in the Divine's play.
- wisdom – seeing and understanding of the interconnection of life. (knowing)
- capacity to lovingly honor the Divine in each other.
- ability to give and receive love.
- ability to celebrate the Divine grandeur in life.
- ability to live the moment fully, which leads to greater sense of fulfillment.
- overall happiness and feeling of full-heartedness.
- light-heartedness, humor and delight in life.
- ability to see the good and auspicious in everything and everyone.
- capacity to be friendly, compassionate, kind, and peaceful.
- sensitivity to everyone and everything.
- appreciation and gratitude for all the blessings in life.
- actions and words which are truthful, uplifting, and life-affirming.

Progress on the path is also reflected in a decrease in:

- Undisciplined anger, feelings of distress, depression, uncontrollable harmful emotions, anxiety and underlying fears, avarice and hatred.

Awakening – Enlightenment

- Spiritual awakening is the ever-expanding process of recognizing that our true nature is perfect, full, and lacking nothing. Spiritual freedom or enlightenment is not a fixed state of being. Rather it is an ever-evolving process of unfolding our innate divine effulgence, goodness, balance, and perfection: a deepening into the perfection that already exists.

Patanjali – Classical Yoga Overview

Overview of some the key verses in the Yoga Sutras

1.2 Yogah chittavritti nirodhaha

Classical: Yoga is the stopping of the fluctuations of the mind.

Shiva-Shakti Tantra: The practice of yoga that leads to a state of union with the heart occurs when the vibrations of the mind-body are channeled into the flow of the Shakti.

1.12 Abhyasa vairagyabhyam tannirodhah

Classical: The stopping of the fluctuations is achieved through practice and dispassion.

Shiva-Shakti Tantra: The balancing of the vibrations of the mind-body occurs by harmony of consistent, long-term, devotional practice and open-hearted freedom.

1.20 Shraddha virya smriti samadhi prajna purvakah itaresam

Classical: To the others, total absorption is preceded by (The Samadhi state of the yogis described in 1.18) faith, courage, memory, concentration, and wisdom.

Shiva-Shakti Tantra: Unity in the Heart occurs in a sequential and cumulative practice of: Trust, committed passion, mindfulness, deep concentration, and applied knowledge.

1.33 Maitri karuna mudita upekshanam sukha dukha punya apunya visayanam bhavanatah cittaprasadanam

Classical: By cultivating attitudes of friendliness toward the happy, compassion toward the suffering, sympathetic joy toward the virtuous, and indifference toward the unvirtuous, the mind becomes tranquil.

Shiva-Shakti Tantra: For your mind to be filled with Grace, be friends of those that are aligned with the Divine, be compassionate that are suffering from misaligning, celebrate the Dharmic, and be radiantly spacious with evil.

2.1 Tapas svadhayaya Ishvarapranidhanani kriyayogah

Classical: Austerity, self-study, and devotion to the Lord form the practice of yoga.

Shiva-Shakti Tantra: Every artistic action of yoga is comprised of a burning for Awakening, mindfully learning to align, and offering love to Shakti.

2.3 Avidya asmita raga dvesa abhiniveshah kleshah

Classical: Afflictions on the path of yoga are: Ignorance, egotism, desire, repulsion, and fear of death.

Shiva-Shakti Tantra: The challenges are: Not seeing the Unity, thinking of oneself above the Merry Band, desiring sensory gratification over fulfillment, reacting away from the center, and clinging to life.

2.29 Yama niyama asana pranayama pratyahara dharana dhyana samadhi astau angani

Classical: The 8-fold practice of yoga is: ethical precepts in relationship with others and oneself, physical postures, breathing exercises, turning inward, concentration on an object, meditation, and spiritual absorption.

Shiva-Shakti Tantra: Same as above.

2.46 Sthira sukham asanam

Classical: One's seat for yoga is steady and comfortable.

Shiva-Shakti Tantra: Your artistic posture is a harmonious dance between steady focus and delight filled flow.

3.4 Trayam ekatra samyamah

Classical: The combined practice of dharana, dhyana, and Samadhi on one object is samyama.

Shiva-Shakti Tantra: Same as above.

3.56 Sattva purusayoh shuddi samye kaivalyam iti

Classical: When the peaceful mind attains purity like the Self, then there is freedom.

Shiva-Shakti Tantra: Pure alignment – Self – balance of purity – Ultimate freedom

4.1 Janma ausadhi mantra tapah Samadhi siddhayah

Classical: Supernatural powers arise from yoga practices in previous lifetimes, or by herbs, mantra repetition, austerity, and Yogic absorption.

Shiva-Shakti Tantra: Same as above.

The siddhis are gifts and divine blessings to help bring more joy and beauty into the world. They give us more power to celebrate and exult in Spirit. Just because someone has a lot of Shakti does not make them necessarily more advanced spiritually. Progress on the path is measured on how we use our siddhis—either in alignment with the divine or against the greater good.

4.25 Vishesa darshinah atmabhava bhavanavirvttih

Classical: To one who sees the distinction between the mind and the Soul, all thoughts of mind as soul cease.

Shiva-Shakti Tantra: When you have seen the distinction between the Light of the soul and the colors of the mind, then all ideas of the colors' independence dissolve.

Bhagavad Gita

Setting

- Takes place 1/3 way through Mahabaharata.
- 18 Chapters, over 600 verses
- Impasse between Pandavas (good side) and Kauruvas/Kurus (bad side), therefore they must battle.
- Arjuna was given a choice between choosing Krishna as his charioteer or gaining a large army, and Arjuna chooses Krishna.
- It is an interlude in the battle where Arjuna and Krishna have a dialogue while the clairoaudient (psychic) Sanjaya listens in to report to the king.

Chapter 1: The Grand Dilemma

- When Arjuna sees his relatives on the side of the opposing army with the Kurus, he loses courage, drops his bow and collapses in despair and grief, declining to fight.

Chapter 2: Get Fired Up for the Game

- Krishna appeals to Arjuna and states that as a warrior he has a duty to uphold the path of dharma through warfare.
- Krishna states that only the body may be killed, while the eternal self is immortal.
- Yoga is defined as skill in action. (Verse: 2.50)

Chapter 3: Karma Yoga

- Krishna stresses to Arjuna that performing his duties for the greater good without attachment to results is the appropriate course of action.

Chapter 4: Offer Everything into the Sacred Fire of your Heart

- Krishna reveals that he has lived through many births, always teaching Yoga for the protection of the pious and the destruction of the impious.
- Krishna stresses the importance of accepting a guru.
- The fire of Wisdom purifies, and the Truth will set you free. (Verse: 4:19, 4:16)

Chapter 5: See the Supreme Dancing in the Every Play

- Arjuna asks Krishna if it is better to renounce (sannyasa) or to act. Krishna answers that both ways may be beneficent, but that acting in Karma Yoga is superior.
- Offer your actions to God and surrender the fruits of your work.

Chapter 6: The Yogi is the Disciplined Player

- Practice meditation ('harmony of the soul') regularly on a proper seat (asana) in a quiet, pure place with freedom from passionate desires.
- Yoga brings a freedom from pain and suffering.

Chapter 7: I AM the Quintessence: Realization through Knowledge

- Dust off the Mirror (Maya) of the Heart with knowledge of the Supreme (Jnana Yoga).
- Krishna introduces the Tattvas.

Chapter 8: Imperishable Eternal

- Krishna defines the terms Brahman, Adhyatma, Karma, Atman, Adhibuta, and Adhidaiva.
- Krishna recommends placing one's mind on him with singular devotion at the time of death in order to not be re-born, but instead to ascend into Ultimacy permanently.

Chapter 9: Raja Yoga

- Krishna explains that all beings exist within him, yet he is more than all beings together. (The Whole is greater than the sum of its parts.)

Chapter 10: I AM THAT I AM

- All the philosophy from the first 9 chapters is summarized in this chapter.
- Krishna describes how he is the ultimate source of all material and spiritual worlds.
- Arjuna accepts Krishna as the Supreme Being.

Chapter 11: The Revelation of the Scope of the Game - The Universal Form

- On Arjuna's request, Krishna displays his "universal form" (Vishvarupa), a theophany of a being facing every way and emitting the radiance of a thousand suns, containing all other beings and material in existence.

Chapter 12: Love the Universal through the Immanent: Bhakti Yoga

- Krishna describes the process of devotional service (Bhakti Yoga).

Chapter 13: The Player and the Field

- Krishna describes nature (prakrti) as the field, the enjoyer (purusha) and Consciousness as the player.

Chapter 14: The Gunas – The 3 Threads of the Net

- Krishna explains the 3 modes of material nature (the gunas)
  - Sattva – Pure harmony and balance; lucidity.
  - Rajas – Passion; activating.
  - Tamas – Darkness; slowing.
- The yogi who in even-minded, impartial, steady, unperturbed, selfless, and dwelling in his inner Self is free from the gunas.

Chapter 15: The Ashvattha Tree

- Krishna describes a symbolic tree (representing the Universal in material existence), its roots in the heavens and its foliage on earth.
- Krishna explains that the lower roots of this tree should be felled with the "blade (ax, sword) of non-attachment", after which one can go beyond to his supreme abode.
- The highest teaching is that perfect non-dualism is the essence of everything: Nothing exists that is not Shiva-Shakti!

Chapter 16: Gods and Demons

- Krishna details divine and demonic traits, and explains that virtues lead to freedom, while vices lead to bondage.

Chapter 17: 3 Levels of Living

- Krishna tells of three divisions of faith, thoughts, deeds and even eating habits corresponding to the three gunas – in all cases he recommends the sattvic way.

Chapter 18: All Love!

- In conclusion, Krishna asks Arjuna to abandon all forms of dharma and simply surrender unto him. He describes this as the ultimate perfection of life.
- Whatever action might be performed by a yogi, free from the gunas, empowered by the beauty of the realization of his own Self, will be done effortlessly.
- Krishna: "Fix your mind on Me; be devoted to Me; offer sacrifices to Me; honor Me; and you will come to Me. This I promise since you are dear to Me." (18.65)
- Arjuna last statement to Krishna in the Gita. "By your Grace my confusion is now destroyed. I remember my Light, my faith is firm, and my doubts are gone. I will follow your will." (18.72)

Practicing Anusara Yoga

Universal Principles of Alignment

The benefits of applying the UPA in yoga practice to create good alignment:

- Spiritual
  - Revelation, recognition (pratyabhijna)
  - Bliss of freedom
- Mental
  - Since the principles are universal and occur in every single pose it frees your mind from trying to constantly figure out what the proper alignment is for any one pose.
- Physical
  - Optimal flow of prana
  - Optimal flow of fluids
  - Optimal health

The 3 A's

Philosophical Overview – Attitude, Alignment, and Action

All three A's are present in each pose.

The 3 A's are reflections of Iccha, Jnana, Kriya on a physical level.

- Attitude – Iccha – Heart
- Alignment – Jnana – Mind
- Action – Kriya – Body

- Attitude – intention
- Alignment – knowledge of technique
- Action – manifestation

- Attitude – philosophical vision that answers: Why?
- Alignment – technical method and knowledge that answers: How?
- Action – outer form manifestation that answers: What?

- Attitude – The desire to unlock the door and be free.
- Alignment – The knowledge of how to align the key in the lock, and how to turn the key to open the door to freedom.
- Action – The act of turning the key in the lock. The amount of force needed to turn the key.

Attitude (the Will to be, know and to do)

Iccha – Willpower – Effort – will to be

- Intention – Setting intention
- Power of intention is related to meaningfulness.

- Highest Purposes of Anusara Yoga
  - Self-knowledge – to know oneself (Chit)
  - Awakening, recognition, remembrance, self-realization, enlightenment, (Shiva)
  - Creative expression – to enjoy the freedom of being (Ananda)
  - Make beauty, serve the increased joy of the whole, exulting in the Goodness, celebration. Flowing with Heart. (Shakti)

Fundamental Attitude – a balance of individual focus with opening to Grace

Opening to Grace - Invoking Grace

- Softening the outer boundary, releasing the limiting definition of oneself, emptying out in order to be filled up with the Universal.
- Remembering the Universal. We start by opening to something bigger. There is a natural expansion inside because the outer boundary of our individuality softens and opens.

Balanced Attitude

- Balance between self-effort and opening to Grace; focus and opening; giving and taking; releasing and receiving.
- Desire for the cultivation of virtues: Qualities of heart
  - Yamas and Niyamas
  - Beginner's mind
  - Longing for freedom, longing to know, longing to love.

Saying Yes to Life

- Aligning with the Divine
- Taking your seat with honor and devotion
- Setting the foundation of the pose
  - First step in embodying ones' intention.

Alignment (knowing the Will)

The elements of Alignment are:

- The dynamic symmetry or conscious interconnectedness between various parts of the inner and outer body; the mindfulness and self-awareness of how well our posture reflects our Attitude.
- The spatial position of the inner body in relation to the outer body; the alignment of the inner body deals with the positioning of the prana, mind, and higher consciousness in relation to the outer body and the outer environment.
- The outer shape and form of the pose; the alignment of the outer body deals with muscular, skeletal, and internal organ positioning. The particular shape of the body is what defines and distinguishes one pose from another.

Alignment encompasses the steady, consistent awareness throughout an asana that is a defining factor in the practice of yoga, as well as the seamless awareness of transitioning from one pose to another.

- The first step in aligning your body optimally is to know the position of your Optimal Blueprint and the current position of your body in relation to this Blueprint.

Action (manifesting the Will)

The grand pulsation of contraction and expansion in the body.

Muscular Energy – manifesting energy

- Magnetism - Gravity
- Stability allows for opening. You won't soften and open and become vulnerable unless you feel safe.
- Use the minimum amount of effort to maintain integrity of the pose.

Organic Energy – liberating energy

- Electricity

Action vs. Movement

- Action contains forces that maintain integration throughout the parts of the body while they are perhaps moving in the pose at different rates of speed.
- Movement by itself does not contain integrating forces which create resistance to hyperextension and disconnected flow.

Focal Points

- The Focal Point is a key power center in the body within a given asana. It is the place in the body into which Muscular Energy collects and pools, and from which Organic Energy extends out. You can visualize the Focal Point as a small orb of energy the size of a small apple. It is like a miniature sun where prana is being magnetically drawn into and from which prana shines back out.
- The Focal Point is located along the central core line or the central axis of the body, which runs from the crown of the head down through the core of the torso out through the center of the pelvic floor.
- The Focal Point is located in three possible places in the body:
    - Core of the pelvis—in line where the bottom of the sacrum meets the top of the tailbone, the coccygeal process. This is the intersection of the Pelvic Loop and the Thigh Loop.
    - Bottom of the heart—top of the diaphragm in the center of the torso at the core of the chest. It is in line between the bottom of the shoulder blades on your back, and the bottom of the breastbone (zyphoid process) on your front. This is the intersection of the Kidney Loop and the Shoulder Loop.
    - Center of the upper palate— inside the back of the mouth in line with where the top of the spine (the Atlas vertebrae) meets the base of the skull. Also, it is in line with where the jaw bone connects with the skull. This is the place where the Shoulder Loop and the Skull Loop intersect.
- In any given pose, only one Focal Point is active. The active Focal Point is the one that is nearest to the most weight-bearing part of the pose.
- Supine poses, prone poses, or other poses where the three possible Focal Points are on the same horizontal level and equally weight-bearing—the pelvic Focal Point becomes the active one by default.

Balanced Action

Balance of the forces of stability and freedom.

- No action is mutually exclusive. Everything has its contrary complement. For every line of energy, there has to be an equal and opposite line.
- Balance doesn't mean static. It is a dynamic exchange between taking and giving in a balanced relationship.
- Empty out in order to become full. Actively feed oneself in order to be able to actively feed others.
- Balance of action leads to freedom.
- The balance of contrary, yet complementary actions creates the middle, which a sattvic, optimal place for any particular situation.
- The middle – the peaks and valleys in the cycle, the space in the middle, the gap between the sounds (sandhi), the pause in the breath, the gap between night and day.
- The middle point or place of balance leads to freedom:
    - Freedom of pranic flow, freedom of pain.
    - Leads to revelation and increased creative capacity.

Degree of balanced action

- Every action is performed fully (purna), or to one's capacity in any given time and place.
- Purna in the context of action refers to expressing the pose fully and doing what is appropriate and optimal for the situation. It is offering 100% to the moment, and doing the best that you can. Depending on the situation you might be fully quiet, sensitive, and relaxed, or you might by fully radiant, outwardly expressive, and focused.
- Performing fully is about increasing the refinement and depth of the balanced action. You can be deeply soft and open, or deeply focused and strong.
- Performing fully means to play the edge or the threshold of our potential.
    - The edge is where the alchemy or transformation takes place. It is the critical point where a quantum shift from one level to another occurs instantaneously.
- Performing fully in any moment expands the middle place of balanced action between contrary compliments. By playing the edge, the boundary line of our potential moves further out, so our capacity for our individual expression and knowing of Shiva/Shakti within us grows.
- Our aspiration for the highest within the practice moves us out to the edge, while our sensitivity to the universal keeps us from going too far and over the edge.

Integrity of a pose

- When all 3 A's are present then there is integrity to the pose.
- There is integrity when the intention and attitude have been accurately transmitted and expressed through the form and action of the pose.
- The degree of power and meaningful, knowledge and skill behind each of the 3 A's must be considered in order to determine degree of integrity.
    - Is the intention of the action or the pose remembered?
    - Is there balanced energy flow throughout the pose so the quality of the pose is Sattvic?
    - Are all the parts contributing in a balanced, harmonious way to glorifying the Universal energy of the pose? Is there balanced integration in the pose?

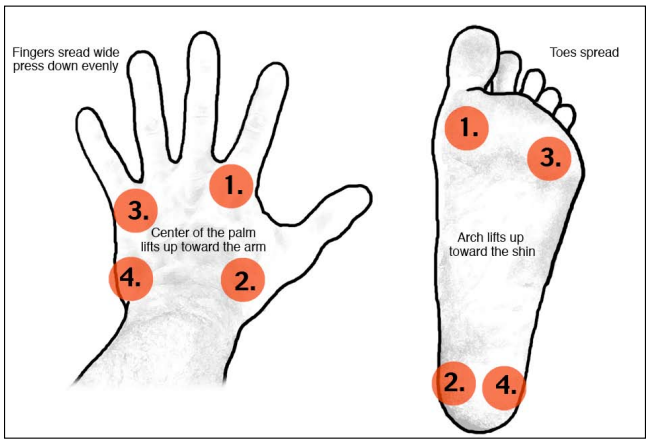
- Is there balance between ME and OE?
- What degree of fullness is the pose? Is the pose being expressed at its potential?

Applying the 3 A's Specifically in the Poses

The 5 Universal Principles of Alignment

- Dynamic pulsation between the principles.
- Additive and progressive. Eventually they occur simultaneously.

Opening to Grace



Setting the Foundation of the pose:

- Set the foundation mindfully with devotion and Shri. Foundation reflects highest intention. Associated with Attitude.
- Width of stance reflects a balance of stability and freedom.

  4 corners of the Foundation – grounding the Sky

Inflating the inner body throughout, while naturally releasing the foundation downward.

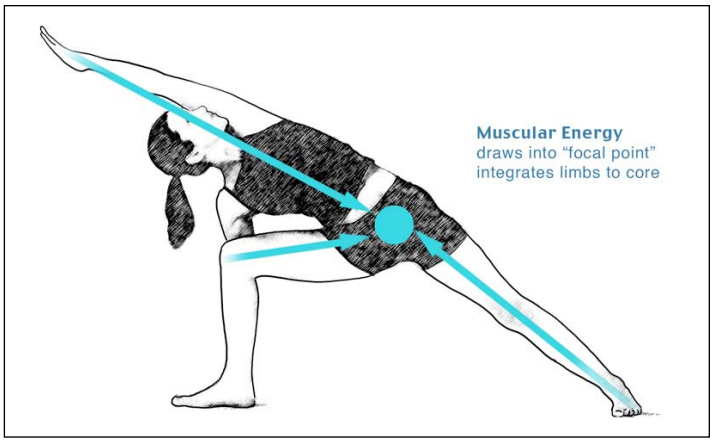
Inner body bright

- Natural expansion of Light from the Focal Point in all directions equally. Expanding in all directions with passive Organic Energy
  - Expanding the Inner Body on all sides of the body – like the vastness of the sky:
    - Front – front of lung and heart shine, petals of chakras opening
    - Back – kidney area, back of lungs fill in
    - Sides – side body long, lungs shine
      - Up – through the neck and the head – hyoid balances

Releasing the foundation heavily downward with passive Organic Energy.

- Softening the outside, softening the skin, draping onto the fullness of the inner body. (follows Inner Body bright)
- Melting the heart. (a form of passive Muscular Energy)
  - The nexus of the vertical and horizontal midline of torso melts toward the earth.

Muscular Energy

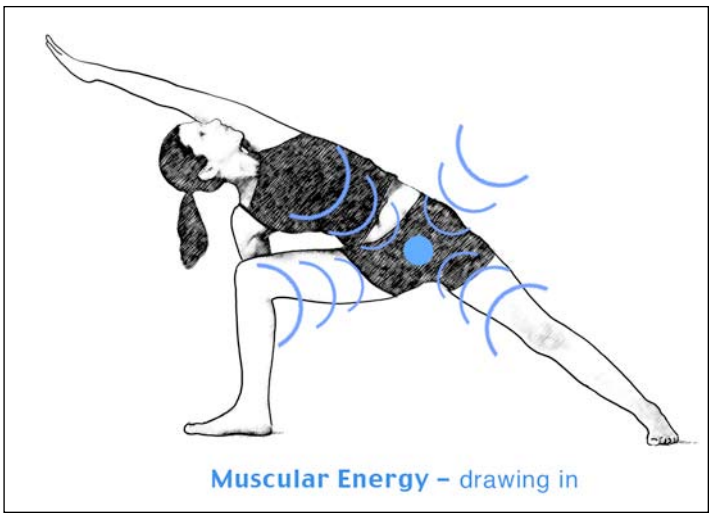


Passive vs. Active Muscular Energy

The 3 main directions of Muscular Energy flow:

1. Surface to core lines.
2. Draw to the midline.
3. Periphery to the Focal Point along core lines.

Shoulders/Arms

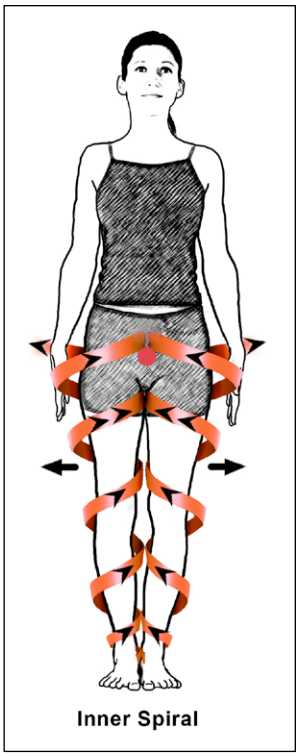


- When the arms are overhead – outer elbows, inner deltoid, outer shoulder blades move in the back plane at the same rate.
- Head of the armbones move back into the back plane. This "hollows the armpits."
- Draws into the Focal Point from all sides of the hands evenly like putting on energy gloves.
- Shoulder blades move more flat on the back.
- ME in biceps, ME in outer forearms

Hips/Legs

- Draws up into the Focal Point from all sides of the feet evenly like putting on energy stockings.
- Tones the connective tissue around in the lower back, particularly around the sacroiliac joints.

Inner Spiral/Expanding Spiral


Inner Spiral

Spirals - Refined alignment principles

Widening the back body, both in the hips and the upper back/shoulders.

- Broadening the back connects us to the universal

Shoulders/Arms

Expanding Spiral of the arms

- Expands the upper back and back of the shoulders.
- Widens the shoulder blades away from each other.

Find the balance of rotating the upper arm outward, and rotating the forearm inward.

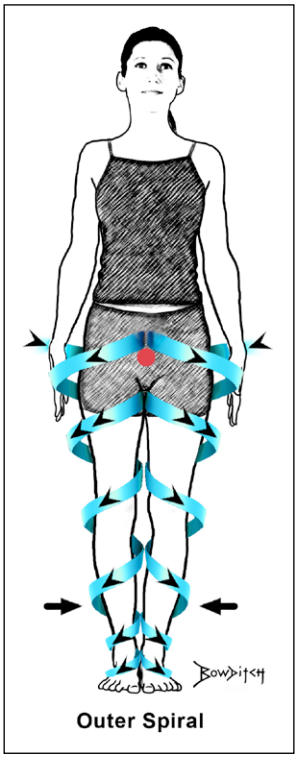
Hips/Legs

3 Aspects of Inner Spiral

- Turns legs and pelvis inward.
- Moves inner edges of legs backward.
- Broadens legs and pelvis laterally.

Shins in – thighs out.

Outer Spiral/Contracting Spiral


Outer Spiral

Narrowing the back body, both in the hips and the upper back/shoulders.

- Narrowing the back pushes us into the front body – individual

Shoulders/Arms

Contracting Spiral of the arms

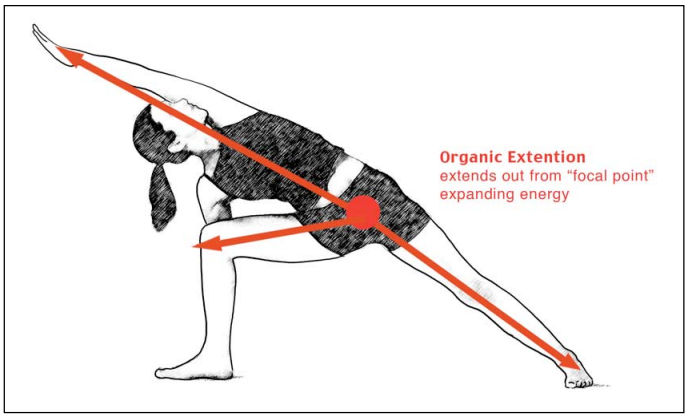
- Contracts the upper back and back of the shoulders.
- Draws the shoulder blades toward each other.

Hips/Legs

3 Aspects of Outer Spiral

1. Turns the legs and pelvis outward.
2. Moves inner edges of the legs and pelvis forward.
3. Draws sides of the pelvis and legs toward midline.

Organic Energy

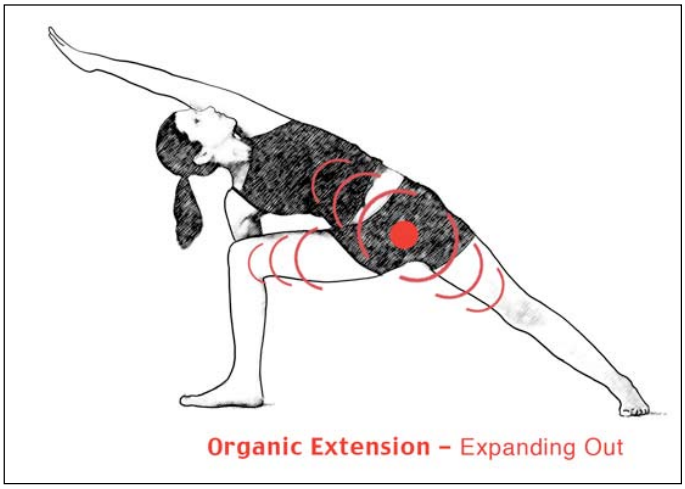


Passive vs. Active Organic Energy

The 3 main directions of Organic Energy flow:

1. Focal Point out to the periphery along core lines.
2. Expand away the midline.
3. Expand from core lines perpendicular to surface of extremities.

Shoulders/Arms



- Extends out from the Focal Point through all sides of the arms, hands, and fingers evenly.
- Expands the shoulder girdle, top chest, and upper back circumferentially.
- Widens the ribcage and the shoulder blades from the midline.

Hips/Legs

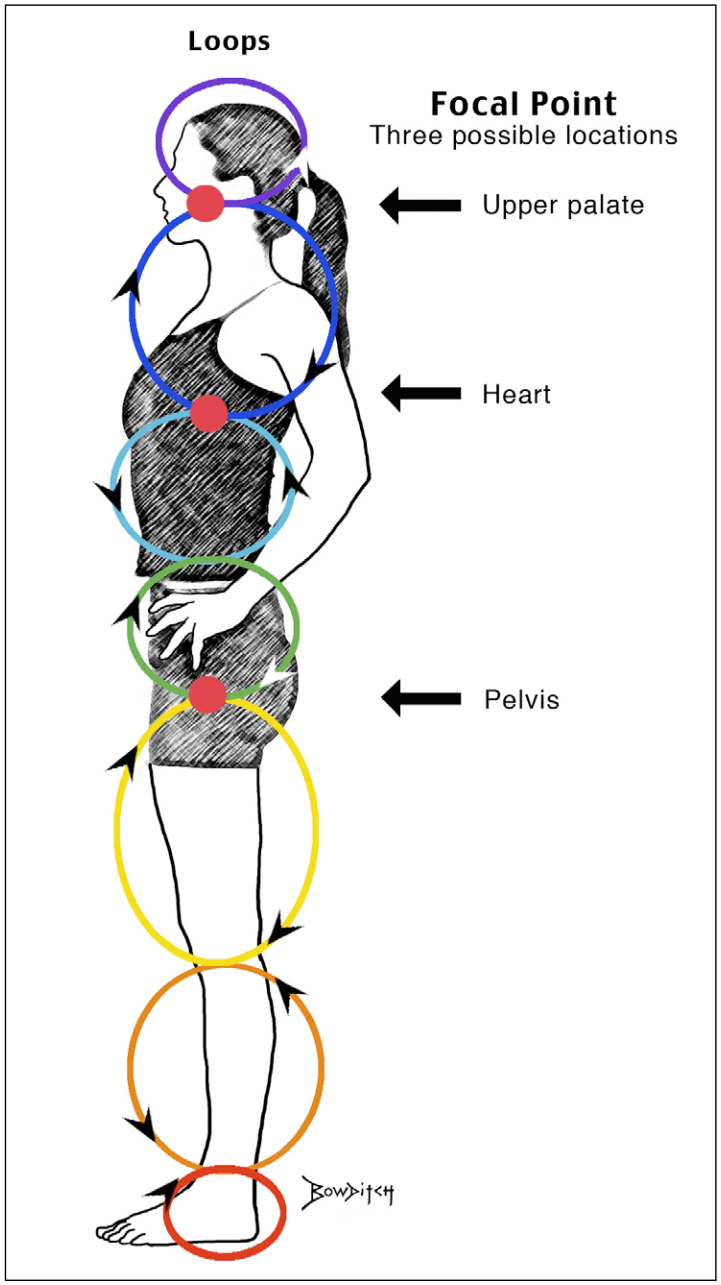
- Extends out from the Focal Point through all sides of the legs and feet evenly.
- Lengthens the connective tissue in the hips and legs, especially the hip flexors including the iliopsoas.

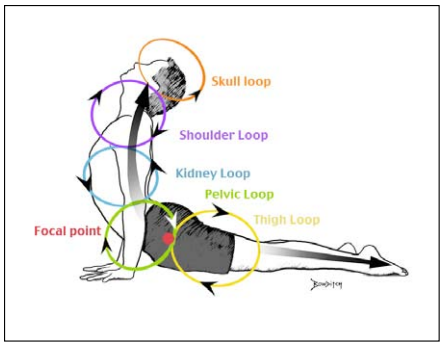
Descend to Ascend

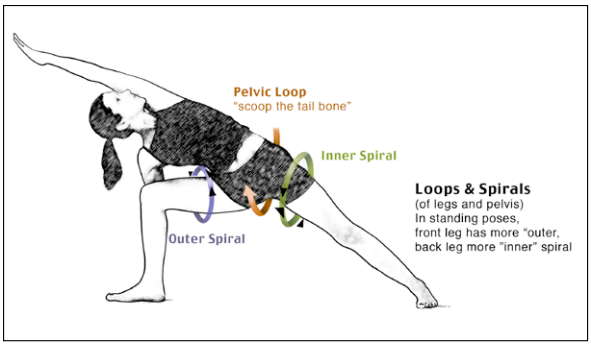
- Rooting vs. Sprouting/Grounding vs. Ascending
  - o When the Focal Point is in the pelvis, then the pelvis and the tailbone move down, while the sacrum and rest of the spine move upward.

The Loops

- Loops are refined currents of energy flow in the body which are initiated by the flow of Muscular and Organic Energy. These more advanced energetic actions serve as the fine tuning dials for increased alignment in order to optimize the flow of energy within the body.
- The main flows of Muscular and Organic Energy to and from the Focal Point along the core lines of the body are considered primary energy vectors in the pose, while the Loops are secondary or refined energy movements which enhance alignment.
- Loops are circular flows of subtle energy that rotate in the sagittal plane of the body and interconnect to each other like gears. They flow in seven main sections of the body—the feet, lower legs, upper legs, pelvis, mid-torso, upper torso/shoulders and neck, and the head.







- In each of the seven sections, Loops flow independently on the right and left sides of the body. You can think of these seven pairs of Loops as bilateral wheels that spin at different velocities.
  - The front leg Pelvic Loop must spin faster than the back leg Pelvic Loop in order for dynamic symmetry and balanced action in the pose to take place.
- All the Loops begin along the coronal plane, which divides the body into front and back halves. The Loops initially flow from the coronal plane to the back body, then around to the front of the body, and finally back to the coronal plane.
- Initiating the flow of the Loops on the back of the body first, instead of the front, creates a softer, more expanded and quieter action. When the Loops are initiated on the front body first, the action is often binding, aggressive and hardening.
- In general, when adjusting or activating the Loops, begin with the Loop(s) at the foundation of the pose and move upward through the Loops in sequence.

The seven pairs of Loops are:

1. Ankle—starts at the base of the shinbone just above the ankle. It moves down the back of the heel, forward along the bottom of the foot, then back up through the center of the arch to the front of shin base.
2. Shin—starts at the base of the shinbone just above the ankle. It moves up the back of the calf muscle to the top of the shins just below the knee, forward through the top of the shin, then down the front of the shin back to the base of the shin.
3. Thigh—starts at the top of thighbone in the core of the pelvis (pelvic Focal Point). It moves down the back of the leg to the top of the calf muscle, forward through the top of the shin, and then up the front of the leg through the lower abdomen back to the Focal Point.
4. Pelvic—starts in the core of the abdomen in line with the middle of the lumbar and a place just below the navel. It moves down from the middle of the lumbar to the middle of the buttocks in line with the bottom of the sacrum, forward through the floor of the pelvis (pelvic Focal Point) to the top of the pubic bone, then up the lower abdomen to just below the navel. The Pelvic Loop has the same direction of rotation as the Thigh Loop. However, they have opposite effects on the alignment of the body. The Thigh Loop moves the top of the thighs backward, while the Pelvic Loop moves the top of the thighs forward.
5. Kidney—starts in the core of the abdomen in line with the middle of the lumbar and a place just below the navel. It moves up the back from just below the kidneys to the bottom of the shoulder blades, forward through the top of the diaphragm (heart Focal Point) to the base of the sternum, then down the solar plexus to just below the navel.
6. Shoulder—starts at the center of the upper palate (skull Focal Point). It moves down the back of the neck and the upper back to the bottom of the shoulder blades, forward through the bottom of the heart and the top of the diaphragm, then up the chest and throat from the base of the sternum to the upper palate.

7. Skull—starts at the center of the upper palate (skull Focal Point). It moves back and up along the back of the skull, forward over the top of the head, then down the face back to the upper palate.

The Loops interconnect with each other and so influence each other as they are independently activated. For instance, as you Outer Spiral the legs the Pelvic Loop is activated, which in turn will help to increase the Kidney Loop.

The seven Loops also connect into these five universal alignment steps as follows:

1. Opening to Grace helps to establish the Kidney Loop.
2. Muscular Energy helps to initiate the Shin and Shoulder Loops.
3. Inner Spiral relates to the Thigh Loop.
4. Outer Spiral relates to Pelvic Loop.
5. Organic Energy helps to initiate the Ankle and Skull Loops.

Even though each Loop is spinning in a particular direction, the primary flow of Organic Energy moves the Loops out away from the Focal Point. The Loops below the Focal Point extend toward the earth into the foundation, while those above the Focal Point extend up toward the sky. So, while each Loop is spinning in space, its main direction of movement ultimately is away from the Focal Point. Also, as Organic Energy helps to open up and extend the body, the Loops also expand and get bigger in circumference. So, if a Loop gets smaller in a pose, then it indicates that Organic Energy in that part of the body is lacking and so there is a misalignment which is causing undue compression.

Other Key Principles of Alignment

- Initiate from the back body first.
- Move from core to periphery – from universal to individual
- Move from stability and integration first
- Active stability before active expansion.
- Inner Spiral always precedes Outer Spiral.
- Adjust the alignment of back leg before adjusting the front leg.
- Inner Spiral and Outer Spiral balance each other in every pose. The dynamic, balanced relationship between the Spirals creates Mulabandha at the center of the pelvic floor.
- Inner Spiral occurs more naturally in forward bends, while Outer Spiral occurs more naturally in backbends.
- See-saw Principle – moving one end of a limb or a body part will tend to move the opposite end or section in an opposite direction.

Transitioning (Vinyasa)

Here are a few principles for moving from position to another:

- Move with the breath. (Follow principles of the breath)
- Keep breathing into the back body while transitioning.
- Move with steady, flowing, and graceful rhythm.
- Maintain steady awareness moment to moment in the transition.
- Maintain integrity of the pose moment to moment.
- Root down from the Focal Point into the foundation while going in and out of poses.

The Principles of the Breath in Practice

- Breath is the medium between Attitude and Action. The breath interweaves the threads of one's intention into the fibers of the outer body. It is the uniting force between mind and body—heart essence and outer vessel.
- Using the breath to initiate the creation of the final stage of a pose is a basic element of Action. From the core of one's being, Attitude wells up through the breath. The breath, as the agent of Attitude, consciously initiates the movement of the inner body. From the Action of the inner body, the outer form of the body moves into the final stage of the pose.
- The breath carries the power of intention that enlivens the pulsation and flow of both Muscular Energy and Organic Energy.

The Natural Breath

- The natural breath is the healthy, free, and uninhibited breath we were born with. Without any conscious effort, babies breathe with beautiful freedom. Their whole body seems to expand and contract with every inhalation and exhalation. This natural breath happens spontaneously for all of us, except when consciously affecting the breath when practicing pranayama or hatha yoga asanas, or when we are energetically disturbed—physically, emotionally or mentally.
- Awareness of natural breathing is simply observing the free flow of the breath without any conscious manipulation.
- With perfect relaxation, the belly distends on inhalation and gently retracts on exhalation. Pauses in the breath occur naturally at the top of each inhalation and at the bottom of each exhalation. During periods of relaxation, e.g., before going to sleep at night, exhalation becomes dominant. Inhalation becomes dominant during periods of arousal, e.g., waking up in the morning. Generally, the exhalation and inhalation are balanced during the middle of the day. This is the natural rhythm of the breath.

Main Elements of the Natural Breath

- Inhalation

  During inhalation, the following movements and actions occur in the body:

  - The diaphragm flattens and descends causing the abdominal organs to push down and distend the belly.
  - The pelvic floor descends, expands, and widens.
  - The collarbone lifts and rolls upward, and the upper arms externally rotate.
  - The inner pressure of the head empties like sand in an hourglass.
- Exhalation
  - During exhalation, the following movements and actions occur in the body:
  - The diaphragm lifts and domes upward, and the belly relaxes and softly retracts.
  - The internal organs relax and expand.
  - The pelvic floor gently lifts and shrinks in circumference.
  - The collarbone descends, and the upper arms internally rotate.
  - The outer body of the skull softly expands.

Ujjayi

- Ujjayi literally means, "triumphantly uprising." It refers to the triumphant expansion and uprising of the prana through the sushumna nadi.
- Ujjayi breathing is distinguished by a resonant sound in the throat that is made by toning the epiglottis. It sounds like the deep rumble of ocean waves or like rolling thunder. The sound gives you feedback to monitor the flow of breath.
- This type of conscious breathing is done in all asanas, except Savasana and some restoratives.

General Principles of Ujjayi

- Relax the mind and the brain.
- Keep the eyes tender and heavy, especially on inhalation.
- Keep the nostrils soft and passive.
- Keep the root of the tongue quiet and plump with relaxation, especially on inhalation.
- Let the mind ride on the surface of the breath.
- Permit a pause to occur at the top of each inhalation and at the bottom of each exhalation.
- Perform Mulabandha throughout the Ujjayi pranayama.
- Make the breath flow evenly from the beginning to the end of each wave of inhalation and exhalation. The volume of prana and breath inhaled or exhaled should be equal over each increment of time throughout the entire breath. It is easier to inhale or exhale at the beginning of the breath. Therefore, in order to make the rate and volume of breath even throughout, more conscious power needs to be applied during the latter part of both the inhalation and the exhalation. A simple guideline is to make the first half of the breath less powerful and the second half more powerful in order to make the breath flow evenly from beginning to end.
- Make the sound of both the exhalation and the inhalation steady and even from beginning to end.
- Make the volume of the sound loud enough to hear refinements in your breath, yet not so loud as to agitate the mind or the prana.
- Make the inhalation and the exhalation the same length of time.

Inhalation - Ujjayi

- Tone the lower abdomen by applying the Pelvic Loop, so it does not distend.
- Fill the torso with prana from the pelvic floor to the top of the chest. Prana should fill the lower abdomen first, then the upper abdomen (navel to the diaphragm), followed by the middle ribs or middle torso (diaphragm to middle of chest or nipple line), and finally the upper torso (nipple line to collar bone). Each main section of the torso should fill with equal volume of prana over equal increments of time.
- Fill the bottom of the lungs with air first, then the top lungs.
- Fill in the back of the body first, before the front.
- Soften the upper abdomen enough so that the diaphragm and floating ribs have good movement while keeping the lower abdomen toned. Expand the ribs laterally and concentrically while you simultaneously lift them up.

Exhalation - Ujjayi

- Maintain the internal lift in the spine and torso, collarbone, and top ribs throughout the exhalation.
- Release the breath concentrically.
- Empty the breath from the top first.

General Principles of the Breath in Asana

- Inhalation should be performed when:
  - Opening, unfolding, or expanding the outer body
  - Lengthening and extending the spine
  - Opening the arms to the sides or overhead
  - Coming out of forward bends or lateral standing poses
  - Going up into a pose against gravity
    - Bringing lightness to a pose, e.g., jumping into Uttanasana from Adho Mukha Svanasana, and going up into a hand-balancing pose.
- Exhalation should be performed when:
  - Closing, enfolding, or flexing the outer body
  - Softening the organs
  - Bringing the arms into the midline
  - Going into forward bends or lateral standing poses
  - Releasing down with gravity
  - Twisting
- Conscious breathing into an area of the body helps to expand and soften that area. This increased softness enhances sensitivity because your nerves are more enlivened, and your circulation in that area is improved. Conversely, if you block the flow of breath, you harden the inner and outer bodies, and lose sensitivity. Also, the breath helps to loosen the body, so blocked or stored emotions can be released naturally.
- For poses that generate intense sensations, the breath can be used to help to lessen discomfort, thereby allowing the poses to be held for extended periods. Increasing the power of the breath fuels the internal fire and gives you the ability to dance on the threshold of discomfort without reacting. In this way, you can meet any internal resistance with equal power. By using the breath to help you cultivate courage and steadiness, the threshold will slowly expand outward, thereby reducing the uncomfortable sensations in your pose.
- In some poses, such as deep forward bends or deep backbends, the diaphragm gets compressed making breathing difficult. To reduce resistance to this uncomfortable situation, soften and quiet the breath.
- Breathe through the nose in all instances when practicing asana, except in Simhasana, or when wishing to have more of a cathartic emotional release.
- Form/position affects breath: legs wider releases diaphragm, legs more together tones diaphragm.

Specific Principles of the Breath

- Depending on your vantage point, whether it is from the inner body or the outer body, the association of the inhalation and exhalation with Muscular Energy and Organic Energy differs.
  - From the perspective of the inner body
    - Inhalation increases active Organic Energy. The inner body expands on inhalation as the outer body lightly draws in toward the core.

    - Exhalation increases passive Muscular Energy. The inner body softly shrinks with gravity as the outer body softly lies down on it.
  - From the perspective of the outer body
    - Inhalation increases active Muscular Energy. The inner body feels more integrated.
    - Exhalation increases active Organic Energy.
  - Movement of the breath in conjunction with Spirals
    - Inhalation—Inner Spiral
      - Exhalation—Outer Spiral

General Principles for Classes of Poses

Standing Poses

*A primary alignment focus in all standing poses is "shins in – thighs out."

- Standing poses are the most fundamental class of postures. Tadasana or Samasthiti is not only the quintessential standing pose, but it also serves as the master pose from which all other poses originate. Understanding the principles of alignment for Tadasana provides the student with the knowledge to perform all asanas.
- Through standing poses, you can learn the Universal Principles of Alignment more easily than in the other classes of poses, because the body has the capacity for the greatest range of motion in these poses. Since the hips and the shoulders move so much in these poses (relatively speaking), you can gain body awareness more easily than in other classes of poses.
- Standing poses increase power, strength, and stability in the legs, hips, and back which engenders greater confidence and courage. Furthermore, through learning to root and ground the legs in standing poses, one gains poise and balance. Additionally, standing poses also help to foster vigor and mental alertness.
- By stretching and toning the muscles of the legs with standing poses, general circulation of the legs is increased, thereby reducing the work of the heart at rest. Because of the strenuous nature of standing poses, the heart and lungs are more strongly activated, which helps to detoxify the blood.
- The strong emphasis on Muscular Energy, opening the hips, and rooting of the legs calms the nervous system and helps digestive disorders. As the pelvic floor is both widened and toned, the flow of Apana Vayu is balanced and excess vata dosha is released.

Inversions

*The key alignment focus for inversions includes establishing good foundation, melting the heart, Muscular Energy, and Shoulder Loop.

- Technically, an inversion is any pose in which the head is below the heart.
- Inversions are powerful in their effects on the general functioning of the body because they regulate and optimize the pulsation of internal organs and glands. By inverting the body and using gravity to reverse the normal flow of blood and lymph, the legs and lower body get some fluid drainage, while the glands in the head and upper torso swell with fresh blood. After coming out of an inversion, circulation returns to its normal pattern but with new vitality. All the endocrine glands, which help to rule the immune system and hormone production, are recharged by inversions.

- Aside from the physiological benefits, inversions provide feelings of calm, equipoise, and soothing balance. The agitations of the rational mind are dissolved, and clarity of perception is enhanced.

Hand-balances

*A key alignment focus for hand-balances includes hugging the midline and actively engaging the feet.

Backbends

*The key alignment focus in backbends is to properly open the corners of the body: hips and shoulders. For the hips the focus is on shins in, thighs out (Inner Spiral). While for the shoulders the key principles are: side body long, Shoulder Loop, and "backbend neck."

- Opens up the front body, which tends to be more sensitive and vulnerable than the back of the body. Consequently, backbends require us to be courageous, adventurous, and to trust in our own divine power.
- Undoubtedly, backbends are more effectual in releasing held emotions than any other class of asana. Also, backbends help to cultivate so many positive qualities of spirit. Backbends empower, strengthen, engender enthusiasm, develop courage, and alleviate dullness of mind or heaviness of heart, increase sensitivity to inner feelings, and release happiness and joy.
- On a physical level, backbends create tremendous flexibility, suppleness, and elasticity, thereby giving feelings of youthfulness and lightness. The muscles of the back, legs and shoulders are particularly strengthened. Also, backbends are the best openers for the upper back, chest, shoulders, and front groins. The lungs are opened greatly, which enhances breathing and provides more oxygen to the blood. Backbends are a class of poses that are unsurpassed in building both exceptional stability and extraordinary flexibility.

Sitting Poses

- In classical sitting poses the legs are folded at the hips at 90° while the spine is vertical.
- Classical sitting poses like Sukhasana, Siddhasana, and Padmasana are especially used for meditation and pranayama since the spine can be kept upright for a long period of time with steadiness and relative ease and comfort.

  Other key alignment principles for sitting poses:

  - Foundation balanced – front/back, right/left – hips square
  - Natural curve in lower back
  - Knees below the pelvic crests
  - Tailbone down, sacrum up
  - Includes all the shoulder principles

Sitting Forward Bends

*The key alignment focus in sitting forward bends includes grounding the femurs, while extending the torso.

- Technically, a forward bend is any pose in which the hips flex and the spine is either extended straight or rounded forward.
- Sitting forward bends have two stages of completion. The first stage is a concavity in the lower back and an extension of the spine from the base of the sacrum through the top of the head. The second stage is a bending forward while continuing the spinal extension of the first stage. In the second stage the spine rounds, yet an attempt is made to make the rate of change throughout the curvature of the spine smooth and gradual.

- Sitting forward bends particularly stretch the hamstrings, buttock muscles, and lower back. When the back of the legs becomes more flexible, the pelvis can tip forward more freely, thus releasing pressure on the lower back.
- Forward bends, especially deep ones like Paschimottanasana, tone the internal organs; liver, spleen, kidneys, stomach, intestines, pancreas, and gallbladder.
- Because of the contracting nature of the form, forward bends tend to turn the yogi's awareness inside. The introspective and humbling quality of these poses quiets and cools the nervous system.
- In general, these poses can be held comfortably for longer periods of time than most of the other classes of asana.

Hip-openers

*A key alignment focus in hip-openers is the widening component of Inner Spiral.

- Hip-openers are forward bends which stretch or "open" the adductors and the rotator muscles of the buttocks. In addition, hip-opener poses help the legs extend freely, abduct, and rotate internally. Not only do the adductors and rotator muscles need to be stretched and opened up, but so do the abductors, the front groins, the quadriceps, and the hamstrings.
- In general, hip-openers are among the most complex types of asanas. However, some hip-openers require very little flexibility, strength, or energy in order to perform a rough semblance of the pose. To perform even basic hip-openers with good alignment, requires precise and sophisticated muscular action within the pelvic and hip area.
- Hip-openers help to release lower back tension, knee discomfort, and sciatic nerve discomfort in the legs. Greater hip mobility improves blood circulation to the pelvic bones, lumbar vertebrae and spinal disks, intestines, and reproductive glands and organs.
- In addition, opening the hips helps to release primal creative energy and emotion stored in the pelvic area and at the base of the spine.
- The flow of Apana Vayu is increased, and excessive vata dosha is released which improves digestion and elimination, and helps to calm the nervous system.

Twists

*A key alignment focus in sitting twists is hugging the vertical midline.

- A twist differentiates itself from a turn in that the base or foundation of a twist is steady and resists any movement, while the base of a turn moves along with the distal end of the turn.
- The action of a twist or spiral is more powerfully transformative for the connective tissue, internal organs, glands, and circulatory system than a simple turn or rotation. A twist squeezes and wrings out the organ as if it were a dirty face cloth. When the twisting action is completed and the organ is returned to its original position, fresh blood surges into the organ flushing out wastes and purifying the organ. This action of twisting and releasing is often referred to as "rinsing and soaking." It is a natural and powerfully effective way to detoxify the organs and glands, thereby boosting the health of the whole body.
- Twists are a great way to massage and tone the entire visceral system. They also bring better circulation to the spinal muscles and disks. In addition, musculature and fascia around the waist and ribcage are freed up, allowing greater mobility for the lungs and diaphragm, and thereby improving breathing.

Other Key Alignment Principles for Twists:

- Ground all sides of the foundation equally, especially the side toward which you are turning.
- Initiate the twist from the Inner Body.
- Extend the spine up from the foundation on inhalation and twist on exhalation.
- Initiate the twist from the foundation, and spiral upward around the vertical midline of the body.
- Initiate the twist from the opposite side or backside—the side from which you are turning.
- Expand the body circumferentially around the central axis, especially on the opposite side from which you are twisting.
    - Create a resistance to the twist on the outer body on the side toward which you are turning. To assist this action, extend the limb on the side toward which you are turning with active Organic Energy (e.g. the leg in the sitting twists; the upper arm bone in Sirsasana).

Restoratives

- Restoratives are poses that can be held for long timings (5–30 minutes or longer) without any strain, distress, or overexertion. Most restoratives rely on props, such as blankets, bolsters, belts, benches, pelvic swings, chairs, or a wall, to support the body in a pose without undue tension for an extended period of time.
- The extended time in a pose allows for full circulation of prana, blood, and vital fluids to enrich the glands and organs. In addition, the nervous system is soothed and balanced.

  Other key alignment principles for restorative poses:

    - Be still; don't fidget. If you must adjust your alignment, do it slowly and mindfully.
    - Let your eyes relax deeply, so they feel like they are floating in stillness.
    - Be very silent. Rest and quiet the root of the tongue.
    - Relax and release as much tension as possible without collapsing or losing the integrity of the pose. Some minimal effort is usually necessary to maintain a good alignment.
    - With each soft slow exhalation, turn deeper inside, away from outer stimuli, yet stay present and awake.

Savasana

- Savasana, the pose of the corpse, is the quintessential restorative pose. It is also the ultimate asana of renunciation and non-clinging. Savasana becomes a pose of great offering and celebration. Instead of a pose of unconsciousness or sleep, you are full of awareness, especially of the deepest parts of yourself.
- Savasana teaches you how to be totally open to whatever comes into your field of awareness without reacting or judging. It gives you the opportunity to absorb and assimilate the effects of the poses, and the experiences and insights gained in the practice.
- Savasana represents a transitional period between the hatha yoga practice and outer activities of life. It usually takes 10 -15 minutes in Savasana to become still and quiet enough to fully experience the great rejuvenating benefits of Savasana.

Alignment Principles for the Foundation of the Pose

Hands

- Palm flat, Ridge-tops, fingertips
- Four corners of the palm, crease of the wrist, metacarpals, fingers, fingernails

Feet

- Four corners, four corners of the heels, toes
- Standing poses
  - Tadasana foot
  - Lunge foot (back leg)
- Sitting poses
  - Dandasana foot
  - Janu Sirsasana foot
  - Virasana foot
  - Baddha Konasana foot
  - Tadasana foot

Hips

- Sitting poses
  - Dandasana pelvis
  - Parivrtta Janu Sirsasana pelvis
  - Bharadvajasana pelvis
  - Navasana pelvis
- Other poses
  - Supine pelvis
  - Anantasana pelvis – (Supine twists)

Legs

- Dandasana leg
- Baddha Konasana leg
- Virasana leg
- Cobra leg
- Janu Sirsasana leg
- Rajakapotasana leg
- Anantasana leg

Knees

- Gorakshasana knee
- Vatanyasana knee

Forearms

- Pincha Mayurasana arm
- Sirsasana I arm
- Shayanasana (elbows)

Head

- Top of the head
  Ex: Sirsasana, Dwi Pada Viparita Dandasana
- Back of the head
  Ex: Sarvasana, Setu Bandhasana
- Chin/throat
  Ex: Ganda Bherundasana
- Forehead

Level I Syllabus

Standing Poses

1. Tadasana
2. Uttanasana
3. Parsva Uttanasana
4. Prasarita Padottanasana
    a. hands clasp behind back
5. Utthita Parsvakonasana
6. Virabhadrasana II
7. Utthita Trikonasana
8. Lunge pose – hands on floor
    a. straight leg
    b. bent leg lunge
9. Twisting Lunge pose
10. Virabhadrasana I
11. Ardha Chandrasana
12. Parivrtta Trikonasana
13. Parivrtta Parsvakonasana
14. Parsvottanasana – hands on floor
    a. hands on the hips
    b. hands in reverse anjali mudra
15. Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana
    a. lifted leg bent
    b. leg straight forward
    c. lifted leg to side
16. Vrksasana

Sitting Poses, Forward Bends, and Hip-openers

1. Balasana
2. Dandasana
3. Virasana
4. Sukhasana
5. Siddhasana
6. Baddha Konasana
7. Eka Pada Rajakapotasana prep.
8. Janu Sirsasana

9. Triangmukhaipada Paschimottanasana
10. Baby Cradle - leg to the chest
11. Marichyasana I
12. Upavistha Konasana
13. Parsva Upavistha Konasana
14. Agnistambhasana – (fire log pose)
15. Paschimottanasana
16. Krounchasana
17. Ardha Padmasana
18. Navasana

Sitting Twists

1. Suhkasana
2. Marichyasana I
3. Marichyasana III
4. Bharadvajasana I
5. Bharadvajasana II
6. Ardha Matsyendrasana I

Inversions

1. Sirsasana
2. Sirsasana II
3. Sarvangasana
4. Halasana

Backbends

1. Salabhasana – torso elevated, legs down
2. Bhujangasana
3. Urdhva Mukha Svanasana
4. Eka Pada Bhekasana
5. Dhanurasana
6. Eka Pada Rajakapotasana I prep – one leg in Bhekasana
7. Eka Pada Rajakapotasana II prep – one leg in Bhekasana
8. Purvottanasana
9. Supta Virasana
10. Ustrasana
11. Setubandha Sarvangasana

12. Urdhva Dhanurasana

Handbalancings

1. Adho Mukha Vrksasana
2. Vasisthasana
   a. one leg bent, foot on floor
   b. legs together
   c. leg in Vrksasana
   d. lifting leg, holding foot
3. Bakasana
4. Eka Hasta Bhujasana
5. Astavakrasana

Supine

1. Supta Padangusthasana variations:
   a. prep – one knee, thigh toward chest
   b. forehead to shin
   c. leg out to side - externally rotated, internally rotated
   d. leg across the body – variation with knee bent for supine spinal twist
   e. knee bent to 90 degrees - thigh to floor
   f. cradle bent leg to chest
   g. bottom leg bent
2. Supta Balasana
3. Jathara Parivartansana with knees – a) knees bent
4. Sucirandhrasana – (eye of the needle)
5. Savasana

Miscellaneous

1. Adho Mukha Svanasana
2. Chaturanga Dandasana
3. 8-Point Prone Pose – (Knees-chest-chin pose)
4. Dying Warrior – a) legs straight

Warm-Ups

1. Cat-Cow – pelvic tilts
2. Cat variations – one leg, one arm
3. Parvatasana – standing

4. Cactus pose
5. Hands clasped behind the back while standing
6. Ardha Uttanasana with hands on a wall
7. Standing thigh stretch – standing Eka Pada Bhekasana
8. Crescent pose – standing
9. Facing a wall w/arm out to the side and palm facing up
10. Lying supine over a rolled blanket – across upper back

Level II Syllabus

Standing Poses

1. Reverse Virabhadrasana II
2. Parivrtta Uttanasana
3. Parsvakonasana – head toward floor
    a. hands clasped behind back
    b. arm underneath leg, hands clasped
4. Urdhva Prasarita Ekapadottanasana
5. Ardha Chandrachapasana
6. Parivrtta Ardha Chandrasana
7. Virabhadrasana III
8. Garudasana
9. Standing Crescent
    a. balancing on one leg
10. Utkatasana
11. Natarajasana – arm to the side holding ankle (baby dancer pose)
12. Hasta Padangusthasana
    a. forward bend with lifted leg horizontal
    b. twisting – leg forward
    c. hands on hips
13. Standing Marichyasana
14. Vrksasana – half lotus
15. Parighasana

Sitting Poses, Forward Bends, and Hip-openers

1. Vajrasana
2. Gomukhasana – feet separated
3. Longhorn Pose – (Swastika Pose)

4. Eka Pada Rajakapotasana prep – shoulder in arch of front foot
    a. twisting
5. Akarna Dhanurasana
6. Omega Pose
7. Ardha Baddha Padma Paschimottanasana
8. Padmasana
9. Marichyasana II
10. Urdhva Mukha Paschimottanasana I
11. Urdhva Mukha Paschimottanasana II
12. Ubhaya Padangusthasana
13. Ardha Navasana
14. Malasana I – arms in front
15. Malasana II – holding ankles
    a. hands clasped behind the back
16. Eka Pada Gomukha Paschimottanasana
17. Hanumanasana

Sitting Twists

1. Virasana
2. Pasasana
3. Parivrtta Balasana
4. Padmasana
5. Parivrtta Janu Sirsasana
6. Parivrtta Upavistha Konasana

Inversions

1. Parsva Sirsasana
2. Parsva Sirsasana in Virasana
3. Eka Pada Sirsasana
4. Parsvaika Pada Sirsasana
5. Urdhva Dandasana in Sirsasana
6. Sarvangasana II – hands clasped / arms straight
7. Supta Konasana in Sarvangasana
8. Parsva Halasana
9. Eka Pada Sarvangasana
10. Parsvaika Sarvangasana
11. Karna Pindasana in Sarvangasana

12. Parsva Pindasana in Sarvangasana

Handbalancings

1. Pincha Mayurasana
2. Visvamitrasana
3. Lolasana
4. Dwi Hasta Bhujasana
5. Bujapidasana
6. Tittibhasana
7. Parsva Bakasana
8. Eka Pada Bakasana I
9. Eka Pada Bakasana II
10. Eka Pada Koundinyasana I
11. Eka Pada Koundinyasana II
12. Dwi Pada Koundinyasana
13. Eka Pada Galavasana
14. Galavasana
15. Kukkutasana
16. Tolasana
17. Kasyapasana
18. Baby Kapinjalasana
19. Mayurasana
    a. Padmasana
20. Hamsasana
    a. Padmasana

Backbends

1. Sphinx Pose
2. Ardha Salabhasana – one leg elevated
3. Viparita Salabhasana prep. – both legs elevated, torso down
4. Makarasana
5. Eka Pada Dhanurasana from all-fours
    a. holding opposite foot
6. Eka Pada Supta Virasana
7. Mermaid Pose
8. Eka Pada Dhanurasana
9. Eka Hasta Ustrasana – one arm overhead
10. Matsyasana

   a. in Supta Virasana
   b. in Padmasana
11. Uttana Padasana
12. Anjaneyasana – deep lunge
13. Bhekasana
14. Rajakapotasana prep – shins vertical
15. Rajakapotasana
16. Urdhva Dhanurasana – drop-back
17. Eka Pada Urdhva Dhanurasana
18. Dwi Pada Viparita Dhanurasana – head off the floor
   a. head on the floor
19. Eka Pada Viparita Dhanurasana I
20. Eka Pada Viparita Dhanurasana II
21. Kapotasana
22. Vrischikasana I – on forearms
   a. feet on chair
23. Padangustha Dhanurasana
24. Eka Pada Rajakapotasana I
25. Eka Pada Rajakapotasana II
26. Natarajasana

Supine and Miscellaneous

1. Urdhva Prasarita Padasana
2. Anantasana
   a. holding foot of lifted leg

Restoratives

1. Adho Mukha Svanasana – head supported
2. Uttanasana – head supported
3. Sirsasana
   a. hanging
   b. head between two chairs
4. Sarvangasana
   a. chair with bolsters supporting legs
   b. shoulders on bolster, feet backward to wall.
5. Halasana
   a. feet to wall

   b. feet on chair
   c. legs on chair or bench
6. Viparita Karani
7. Setubandha Sarvangasana
   a. blocks under sacrum and heels
   b. bolster horizontal across sacrum
   c. cross bolsters
   d. bench or bolsters supporting torso and legs, shoulders on blankets
8. Supta Sukhasana – belt around legs, lying on bolsters
9. Supta Matsyasana – belt around legs, lying on bolsters
   a. Ardha Padmasana
10. Supta Ardha Virasana – supported on bolsters
11. Supta Virasana – supported on bolsters
12. Supta Baddha Konasana
   a. supported by length-wise bolsters
   b. horizontal bolsters
   c. pelvis and feet elevated on bolsters
13. Supported seated forward bends – support chest, belly with blankets, bolsters;
14. Support under forehead, blocks/support under elbows
15. Dying Warrior Pose – supported with bolsters
   a. legs straight
16. Balasana – supported with bolsters
   a. bolsters suspended between two chairs
17. Sitting in a chair, bending forward onto the bolster.
18. Pasasana – sitting on Setubandha bench supported with bolsters
19. Viparita Dandasana
   a. over backbender
   b. over a chair, feet on a wall, rolled
20. Blanket under lumbar, head on bolster

Level III Syllabus

Standing Poses

1. Deep Uttanasana – bending through the legs, arms wrapped around the back
2. Bird of Paradise
3. Utthita Trivikramasana - standing split
4. Standing Sundial
5. Reverse Bird of Paradise
6. Parivrtta Trikonasana – hands clasped around front leg
7. Ardha Baddha Padmottanasana
   a. holding lotus foot
8. Vatayanasana
9. Tiptoe Pose
   a. one leg straight out
10. Parivrtta Ardha Chandrasana - hands clasped around front leg
11. Gorakhasana – balancing on knees in Padmasana
12. Vrksasana - backbend

Sitting Forward Bends and Hip-openers

1. Gomukhasana – feet together
2. Baddha Padmasana
3. Yoga Mudrasana
4. Yogadandasana
5. Samakonasana
6. Eka Pada Sirsasana
7. Bhairavasana
8. Skandasana
9. Garbha Pindasana
10. Kurmasana
11. Supta Kurmasana
12. Supta Trivikramasana
13. Dwi Pada Yogadandasana – bug pose
14. Ardha Mulabandhasana
15. Janu Sirsasana C – Ardha Mulabandhasana forward bend
16. Mulabandhasana
17. Vamadevasana I
18. Vamadevasana II

19. Kandasana
20. Yoganidrasana
21. Dwi Pada Sirsasana
22. Buddhasana
23. Kapilasana
24. Kala Bhairavasana
25. Chakorasana
26. Durvasasana
27. Ruchikasana
28. Viranchyasana I
29. Viranchyasana II

Sitting Twists

1. Paripurna Matsyendrasana
2. Parivrtta Paschimottanasana
3. Marichyasana IV
4. Ardha Matsyendrasana II
5. Ardha Matsyendrasana III
6. Parivrtta Krounchyasana

Inversions

1. Mukha Hasta Sirsasana
2. Padmasana in Sirsasana
3. Parsva Padmasana in Sirsasana
4. Pindasana in Sirsasana
5. Niralamba Sarvangasana I
6. Niralamba Sarvangasana II
7. Parsva Sarvangasana
8. Parsva Sarvangasana in Padmasana
9. Sirsasana III
10. Baddha Hasta Sirsasana
11. Prasarita Hasta Sirsasana – arms straight, hands wide out to the sides

Backbends

1. Setubandasana – on forehead, arms crossed at chest
2. Dwi Anga Urdhva Dhanurasana – one arm, one leg
3. Chakra Bandhasana

4. Mandalasana
5. Laghuvajrasana
6. Bhujangasana II
7. Simhasana – Padmasana
8. Supta Bhekasana
9. Eka Pada Kapotasana
10. Eka Pada Rajakapotasana III
11. Eka Pada Rajakapotasana IV
12. Valakhilyasana
13. Vrischikasana II - handstand
14. Viparita Chakrasana from Urdhva Dhanurasana
15. Gherandasana I – one leg in Bhekasana and the other in Padangusthasana
16. Gherandasana II – one leg and arm in Ardha Baddha Padmasana
17. Kapinjalasana – Vasisthanasana and Padangustha Dhanurasana
18. Viparita Salabhasana
19. Sirsa Padasana
20. Ganda Bherundasana
21. Eka Pada Ganda Bherundasana
22. Tiriang Mukhottanasana

Handbalancings

1. Urdhva Kukkutasana
2. Parsva Kukkutasana
3. Kala Bhairavasana
4. Chakorasana
5. Padmasana in handstand
6. Padmasana in Pincha Mayurasana
7. Karanda Vasana - Pidasana in Pincha Mayurasana
8. Shayanasana
9. One-handed Handstand
10. Dragonfly

Index

A

Action – 3, 9, 30, 32, 33, 41
Acts of Shiva (5 Divine) – 11
Adhikara – 24
Advaita Vedanta – 5
Alignment – 3, 30, 31
  Universal Principles of – 1, 2, 3, 8, 22, 30, 34, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 47, 48
Ananda – 5, 7, 9, 10, 31
Ananda Tandava – 11
Anusara Yoga
  History of – 2
  Methodology – 3
  Overview of – 1, 2, 6
  Purposes for Practicing – 5
  Tantric Vision of – 5
A's – 3, 30, 33, 34
Aspects of the One – 9
Attitude – 3, 30, 31, 34, 41
AUM – 11

B

Backbends – 45, 51, 55, 59
Balanced Action – 33
Bhagavad Gita – 2, 27
Breath – 16, 41, 43

C

Chakras – 20
Chit – 5, 9, 10, 31
Classes of Poses – 44
Cloaks – 12, 17
Contracting Spiral – 36
Cosmic Energy – 16
Cosmology and the Nature of the Universe – 8

D

Divine Acts of Shiva – 11

E

Efficacy of the practice – 25
Ethics – 6
Expanding Spiral – 36

F

5 Divine Acts of Shiva – 11
5 Elements – 9, 15
5 Kanchukas – 8, 12, 13, 17
Five Key Aspects of the One – 9
Focal Points – 32
Foundation – 34, 45, 48
Fundamentals of Practice – 24

G

General Principles for Classes of Poses – 44
Gunas – 14, 29
Guru – 11, 28

H

Hand-balances – 45
Hip-openers – 46, 50, 53, 58

I

Iccha – 9, 12, 14, 17, 18, 30
Inner Body bright – 24, 34
Inner Spiral – 19, 36, 40, 44, 45, 46
Integrity of a pose – 32, 33, 40, 47
Inversions – 44, 51, 54, 59

J

Jnana – 1, 4, 9, 12, 14, 17, 18, 28, 30

K

Kanchukas (5) – 8, 12, 13, 17
Key Aspects of the One – 9
Key Principles of Alignment – 40
Koshas – 15
Kriya – 9, 10, 12, 14, 17, 18, 30
Kundalini – 16

L

Level III Syllabus – 58
Level II Syllabus – 53
Level I Syllabus – 50
Loops – 3, 38, 39, 40

M

Malas (3) – 12, 18
Maya – 8, 12, 13, 17, 28
Melting the Heart – 34
Metaphysics – 6
Methodology of Anusara Yoga – 3
Muscular Energy – 3, 32, 34, 35, 40, 41, 43, 44

N

Niyamas – 31

O

OM – 11
Opening to Grace – 31, 34, 40
Optimal Blueprint – 21, 22, 31
Organic Energy – 3, 32, 34, 37, 38, 40, 41, 43, 44, 47
Outer Spiral – 19, 36, 40, 44
Overview of Anusara Yoga – 1, 2, 6

P

Patanjali – 26
Philosophy – 5
Physical Body – 14, 21
Prana/Pranic System – 19
Pranayama – 26, 41, 42, 45
Principles of Alignment – 1, 2, 3, 22, 30, 34, 40, 44
Purposes for Practicing – 5
Purusha/Prakriti – 5, 9, 13, 17

R

Rajas – 14, 29
Rasas – 13, 15, 17, 18
Restoratives – 47, 56

S

Samkhya System – 13
Sattva – 14, 27, 29
Savasana – 47
See-saw Principle – 40
Shakti – 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 20, 26, 27, 29, 31, 33
Sheaths – 15
Shins in thighs out – 36
Shiva – 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 21, 26, 27, 29, 31, 33
  5 Divine Acts – 11
Shiva-Shakti – 1, 3, 26, 27, 29
Shri – 8, 9,11, 34
Sitting Forward Bends – 45, 58
Sitting Poses – 45, 50, 53
Spiral – 19, 36, 40, 44, 45, 46
Standing poses – 44, 48
Studentship – 24
Sutras – 26
Syllabus
  Level I – 50
  Level II – 53
  Level III – 58

T

Tamas – 14, 29
Tanmatras – 9, 15, 17, 18
Tantra – 5, 7, 26, 27
Tantric – 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 17, 18
Tattvas – 9, 13, 14, 17, 28
36 Tattvas – 17
3 Levels of Mind – 9, 14
Three A's – 30
  3 A's – 3, 30, 33, 34
Three Gunas – 29
  3 Gunas – 14
Transitioning (Vinyasa) – 40
Twists – 46, 47, 51, 54, 59

U

Ujjayi pranayama – 42
Universal Principles of Alignment – 1, 2, 3, 30, 34, 44

V

Vinyasa – 40

Y

Yamas – 31
Yoga Philosophy – 5, 6
Yoga Sutras – 26